

AD-A081 270

MASSACHUSETTS INST OF TECH CAMBRIDGE POLITICAL SCIEN--ETC F/G 5/4
THEORIES OF STATE ANALYZING THE POLICY PROCESS. (U)
NOV 73 L P BLOOMFIELD

UNCLASSIFIED

1 of 1
AD-A081 270

FAR-22300

NL

END
JUL 1980
3-80
DOC

ADA 081270

DOC FILE COPY

(18) FAR

(19) 22306

1
mc

THEORIES OF STATE
Analyzing the Policy Process

Quotation for publication, whether
governmental or private, from the
contents of this document may not
be made without the prior consent
of the author.

The rights of the author of this
document in and to all the content
are protected by law. Further
reproduction of this document in
whole or in part is not authorized.

(10) Lincoln Palmer/Bloomfield
MIT

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release;
Distribution Unlimited

DTIC ELECTED
S MAR 4 1980 D
B

This paper was prepared for the Office of
External Research of the Department of State as one
of a series of studies in Methods and Policy Processes
carried out under the Department's program of external
research. The interpretations, conclusions and sug-
gestions contained in this paper are those of the author
and should not be interpreted as representing the official
views of the Department of State.

(1280)

N
Nov 73

411611

SP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	De Quoi S'Agit II?	2
	Boundaries of the Survey	6
	Elements and Phases of the Process	10
II.	RELEVANT TRENDS IN CURRENT SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH	12
	Systems Approaches	13
	Models of the Process	16
	The Rational Actor Model	20
	The Organizational Process Model	27
	The Bureaucratic Politics Model	32
	The Psychological Approach: Attitudes and Interpersonal Relations	37
	The Information Aspect	44
	The Planning Component	48
III.	THE CASE STUDY APPROACH	57
IV.	CLUES FROM BUSINESS THEORY	66
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69

ACCESSION for	
NTIS	White Section <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DDC	Buff Section <input type="checkbox"/>
UNANNOUNCED <input type="checkbox"/>	
JUSTIFICATION _____	
BY _____	
DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY CODES	
Dist.	Avail. and/or SPECIAL
A	

I. INTRODUCTION*

What follows is a report on research bearing on the policy process in the Department of State. It takes a look at the state of the art in the social science research community, including the main "knowns" and "unknowns" in current theorizing about the way policy decisions are made. Its purpose is to see what, if any, of this intellectual activity might contribute to the Department's mission, and, if the answer is positive, to recommend possibly fruitful lines of further inquiry or action.

This subject matter is singularly full of pitfalls. Let me give just three examples. a.) It is widely believed that the Department "has a problem"; but there is little agreement on defining that problem. b.) Americans traditionally look to organizational solutions to institutional problems; but the relation between organization and the quality of foreign policy is nebulous and unproven. c.) Academic researchers who take an interest in the foreign policymaking process have moved toward some new and interesting intellectual paradigms in recent years; but these do not seem to track with the actualities or needs as seen from the bureaucracy.

The approach here is thus eclectic, and agnostic as well. It starts with no particular assumptions save that the Department's future effectiveness may conceivably be affected by knowledge accumulated by scholars interested in the policy process. Even whether that suggests productive use of taxpayers' funds, I want to leave open until better demonstrated.

*Without expecting them to take any responsibility for the result, I am grateful to the following for advice and suggestions: Hayward Alker, Graham T. Allison, Edward H. Bowman, William F. Pounds, Herbert J. Spiro, John D. Steinbruner, and Pio D. Uliassi.

De Quoi S'Agit-Il?

It is a commonplace that the Department of State does not function today, and has not functioned for many years, in an efficient fashion at either the policy-making level or the management level.

Personnel for the New Diplomacy,
The Herter Report (New York:
Carnegie Endowment for Interna-
tional Peace, Dec. 1962), p. 15.

Considering that the same statement could be - and has been - made any time in the thirteen years that followed the Herter Commission, it might be helpful to anchor our quest in Marshal Foch's deceptively simple question before ascending to the more rarified atmosphere of social science theory.

It is instructive to ask what the Department seeks to achieve via the policy process. The answer that springs to mind is "better foreign policy." More precisely, the aim is to bring to bear on policy formulation and execution the organizational and procedural arrangements that will get the most out of the people involved, generate timely action, encourage imaginative thinking, and pull together effectively the multiple parts of the foreign policy apparatus.

Like all normatively stated goals, this set would not arouse much argument.

But few would say it has been achieved. Diagnoses may vary widely, but one thing that cannot be found is the conviction, either inside or outside the government, that there is no problem and everything is OK. Opinions differ widely as to where the trouble lies. But it has become an accepted article of faith that better process somehow produces better policy.

There may, of course, be a fundamental flaw in that belief, and there is in fact little evidence that any particular process or organization produces a "better" policy. If the problem is discontent with the Department's substantive product, it is not likely to be ameliorated by the usual organizational solutions. It may, however, be affected by some less-common "process solutions", such as improved planning and forecasting capabilities. To this extent, then, process affects, and thus can improve (or worsen), the policy output.

A second definition of the Department's "problem" is more pointed, and has come from the White House during three recent administrations. It takes the form of complaints that the Department is slow in responding to demands, and unimaginative or pedestrian when it does respond.

In some earlier instances the problem was defined in terms of actually opposing the President's chosen policy. Charles E. Bohlen in his recent memoirs reminds us of the wartime belief on the part of President Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins that, given their priority to helping the Soviets' military effort, the "State Department's worry about political problems smacked of foot-dragging."¹

Later Presidents didn't have the problem of substantive opposition to policy, and more recent Presidential criticism of the Department's output turn out to involve either slowness of response, or the lack of incision that often bedevils negotiated documents. Bohlen underlines assertions by President Kennedy's biographers of impatience with the Department when he recalls Kennedy exploding, "Chip, what is wrong with that God-damned department of yours? I never can get a quick answer no matter what question I put to them."²

¹ Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 121.

² Ibid., p. 490. (Bohlen's brave answer was, in effect, "You are.")

Journalist Henry Brandon describes President Nixon on taking office as regarding the State Department bureaucracy as "an incorrigibly lethargic snail protected by a thick shell of tradition, incapable of creative ideas or firm action."³

The Department's primary task is assisting the President in his conduct of the nation's foreign policy.⁴ To the extent that he is not a satisfied customer, to that extent the Department indubitably has a problem.

It is tempting to say that the shortcomings most criticized by the White House could be cured by simply moving papers faster and hiring better stylists. It can also be argued that some of the "bold new initiatives" generated by White House critics of the Department in recent years might in retrospect have benefited from a stronger Departmental advocacy of caution. Also, something can be said for operating so as not to escalate problems to the next level.⁵ Still, when a President wants something new in his foreign policy, he believes he has a problem with the Department if he cannot get it on his terms, and the result in recent years was a further flow of policy-making responsibility away from the Department, which itself created serious problems for the Department as a human institution.

The third way to define the Department's problem is that way - as an institution with unique functions and complex missions, vulnerable to some of the chronic problems of other complex institutions with traditions, elite professional groups,

³ Henry Brandon, The Retreat of American Power (Garden City: Doubleday, 1973), p. 24.

⁴ A recent study suggested regarding the entire policy process as "a basic support system for the President in the foreign policy decision making field". United Nations Association Policy Panel in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: The New Dimension (New York: UNA-USA, 1973), p. 11.

⁵ Adam Yarmolinsky recently wrote "For Defense, action is the object. For State, it is the danger to be avoided". "Bureaucratic Structures and Political Outcomes", Journal of International Affairs, 1969, p. 229. Secretary of State Dean Rusk once said his object was to make foreign policy boring, i.e., get it off the front pages.

and standard operating procedures. In this light, regardless of shifting relationships with the White House, there is a persistent belief, held not only by outside critics but often by officials within the Department, that the process by which policy is developed is somehow badly staffed, inadequate, defensive and protective, inefficient, overburdened, improperly structured, resistant to change, unable to lead, and unresponsive to criticism. Closely linked to this generalized critique is a sense that events always seem to overtake the system, that its preoccupation with crisis (or with routine) does not permit it to get ahead of the exigencies created by the international environment; in short, that the Department does not look ahead or plan ahead sufficiently to be either imaginative or prescient.

This critique is widespread enough to justify a search for knowledge or methods or organizational solutions that might ameliorate the condition. Even if all these criticisms contain some measure of truth, one still is entitled to ask if the problem is to be found in organization, methods, SOP's, or the steps pieces of paper go through; in the attitudes of its personnel; or in the external environment? Suppose it were possible to design a foreign office full of people who were uniformly open-minded, eager for creative change, imaginative, logical in thought, vigorous in advocacy, hospitable to long-range thinking, and rigorous and objective in analysis. How different would our foreign policy actually be? Would it necessarily be better? In fact, would one even need a set of formal processes and procedures if the entire staff possessed these qualities? If U.S. foreign policy were uniformly and popularly "successful", if the President made full use of the Department for all foreign policy advice and operation, and if

Congress were congratulatory about the product, would anyone worry about the "policy process"?

On the other hand, if the problem is that most institutionalized bureaucracies almost by definition do not boast these qualities, can their absence be compensated for by system reforms? What system reforms?

In the inquiry that follows, the "problem" will be taken mainly in my third sense, that is, a set of weaknesses inherent in the Department as a human institution with demanding tasks and critical customers, which demonstrably would benefit from improved capacity to anticipate events, to provide more imaginative solutions to policy problems, and to understand its own processes better. How can outside research and analysis contribute to these ends?

Boundaries of the Survey

1) The present study is by necessity selective, although it touches on the main currents in research. The literature referred to is almost entirely American.

2) I skip much of the outside literature which, while often interesting, is purely anecdotal, historical, hortatory, or without theoretical foundations or usable analytical categories.⁶ Instead, I will concentrate on the analysts who have at least tried to apply theory, including normative theory (and what I suppose is best called "pre-theory"), plus historical case studies that can be generalized from.

3) The inquiry is limited to the Department of State, but the fact is that much of the outside research and analysis of policy process is pointed at the

⁶ As Robert Rothstein says in his valuable new book, there are many memoirs, exposés, and administrative studies of how the Department functions, "but attempts to analyze why the Department and the Foreign Service behave as they do are rare." Planning, Prediction and Policymaking in Foreign Affairs: Theory and Practice (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 34.

Presidential-level policy process, on the unsurprising premise that the President makes foreign policy, with the Department of State but one of the advisory inputs into that process.

4) Much of the recent literature about process deals with crises. Those may be the occasions when the process becomes both visible and interesting; but emphasizing the exception to usual practices has distorted the analysis of process (and policy as well). The rules apply except in crisis, and systematic analysis of process must apply to the normal functioning of the system before it can begin to apply to crisis management. I have tried to correct for this by keeping in mind day-to-day process questions, recognizing that the time it counts is when the process is under strain.

5) The last decade and a half have witnessed the decline of the traditional role of the Department as primus inter pares in the government-wide process of foreign policy-making. The metastasis of power during the 1960's to agencies such as the Pentagon and the White House staff, at the expense of traditional State primacy, yielded in the 1970's to a dramatic centralization of both staff work and decision on most of the foreign policy issues that matter. Analyses of the policy process have naturally been influenced by this condition, although the situation may now of course be changing, and I am assuming revived Department standing.

6.) A great deal of the theorizing about "policy process" goes under the label of "Decision-Making". Do they mean the same thing?

Most academic definitions of Decision-Making (e.g. Snyder, Bruck and Sapin⁷) suggest that the two have much in common, although process can take place without decision. I do not propose to get hung up on that semantic shade of difference, since much of the literature on "Decision-Making" gets to the subject in which we are interested, so much of this report deals with theories about "decision-making".

7) Despite the fact that the 1971 Departmental Task Force reports tended to emphasize the problem of management,⁸ the present survey does not deal with what might be called the Organizational, Management and Methods approaches to improving and "rationalizing" the policy process.⁹ However, I do refer to a new set of approaches and concepts in the theory of business management, known as "Organization Development", which does deal with "policy process" via organization, methods, and management.

8) I will only mention a few examples of approaches to process or decision that seek to apply quantitative and computer technology (e.g. formal modelling of the system, and of the "decision-maker" using techniques of artificial intelligence).

⁷ Their rather formalistic definition of "decision-making" is "a process which results in the selection from a socially defined, limited number of problematical, alternative projects of one project intended to bring about the particular state of affairs envisaged by the decision-makers". Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin, editors, Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 90. See also James N. Rosenau, "The Premise and Promise of Decision-Making Analysis," in Contemporary Political Analysis, James C. Charlesworth (New York: Free Press, 1967); and James A. Robinson and Richard C. Snyder, "Decision-Making in International Politics," in H.C. Kelman, ed., International Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965).

⁸ For example, the "principal cause" of the Department's failings on inter-agency relations was "its weakness in the area of management capability." Diplomacy for the 1970's - A Program of Management Reform for the Department of State (Department of State Publication 8854, December 1970), p. 588.

⁹ The record of major efforts along this line is chronicled in Harris H. Ball, Jr., "An Examination of the Major Efforts for Organizational Effectiveness in the Department of State from 1924 to 1971." Unpublished MBA thesis, George Washington University, School of Government and Business Administration, September 1971.

9) Finally, there are issues about policy process which are obviously more central than those I deal with here, but which do not fall within my mandate to explore theories that might be relevant to the Department's mission. These indubitably "first-order" issues involve: Presidential actions and style; competition between Cabinet-level figures in government; conceptions of foreign affairs which downgrade all but bilateral relations and diplomatic methods;¹⁰ the sociology of closed career services; and the "cultural" gaps between operators and analysts in the government. All these are, as I say, crucial. But there is still a good deal to be said for the "second-order" issues treated here.¹¹

¹⁰ The 1973 UNA-USA panel on Foreign Policy Decision-Making suggested that the problem lies in the inadequacy of the process, not for traditional diplomacy, but for new interdependences. Their approach was to look for new organizational solutions, and for increased standing for multilateral modes of operation.

¹¹

An interesting new work by Richard Smoke and Alexander L. George distinguishes between empirical theory, normative theory, and policy science, which is our focus here. Theory for Policy in International Relations, Discussion Paper No. 19, Public Policy Program, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, June 1973, pp. 1-2.

Elements and Phases of the Process

A final set of distinctions is in order before turning to the literature.

Theorists offer a variety of ways to sort out the component parts of any policy process. Perhaps the most fundamental distinction between modes of analysis is that of "intellectual" and "operational".

Intellectual addresses the "why?" of policy. It encompasses: definitions of interests, underlying assumptions, identification of goals, strategies, priorities, alternatives and options. It deals with both preferences and "rational" calculations.

Operational embraces the other classic political science questions of "who, what, where, how?" (a la Harold Lasswell).

I will leave the latter to the organizational-minded, and concentrate here on the former, as representing the elusive yet all-important heart of the policy process as I understand it.

A recent in-house breakdown of the phases of Departmental decision-making suggested five categories: 1) identifying the issues, 2) dealing with the problem, 3) implementing decisions, 4) appraisal of the decisions, and 5) planning all ¹² in the context of three perspectives (organizational arrangements, flow of activity producing outputs, and flow of information).

I believe however that somewhat more rigor is introduced when the process is broken down into categories suggested by systems theory - Inputs, Decisions, and Outputs. For our purposes, in systems terms, decision-making, traditionally

¹² See the Task Force XIII report on "Management Tools," pp. 546-49. The Task Force found short-term issues well-identified, dealt with, and implemented, but not the long-range or less urgent. Appraisal, planning and review were all adjudged as very weak. p. 535. Burton Sapin sees decisions as calling for three broad categories of intellectual product and performance: intelligence, policy analysis, and planning. The Making of United States Foreign Policy (Washington: Brookings, 1966), p. 289.

seen as an independent variable with the international system the dependent variable,¹³ is the dependent variable.

The process, seen dynamically, breaks down into phases when one uses the words of systems theory -- Inputs, Decision, and Outputs.

Inputs include: information, observing, reporting, intelligence; also personnel and their training.

Decisions include: the use of information, the process of analysis centering on goals and alternative strategies, policy options, discussion, bargaining, advising, recommending.

Outputs include: policy choices, implementation and follow-through, informing , negotiating, persuading. Also learning, and consequent feedback into input, closing the "cybernetic loop."

The area I propose to cover bears mostly on inputs and decisions. It thus focuses more on means than on ends. I explained earlier that truly first-order issues of policy process would have to confront important questions of value, and we are deliberately excluding these here. In closing this introduction, I would nonetheless note Harlan Cleveland's cautionary question: "whether systems thinking may have retarded our capacity to cope with ethical issues, to think systematically about values."¹⁴

¹³ A position taken, for example, by the late Arnold Wolfers; see. "The Actors in International Politics" in William J. Fox, ed., Theoretical Aspects of International Relations (South Bend: Notre Dame, 1959). In the same spirit, Dean Acheson once said that, to believe the social scientists, he should title his memoirs "I Was A Dependent Variable."

¹⁴ Speech to Operations Research Society of America, May 11, 1973.

II. RELEVANT TRENDS IN CURRENT SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

There is, as may be surmised, no coherent body of theory that is directly relevant to the operations and problems of the State Department, although much that bears indirectly, as we shall see. The search for relevant theory thus conforms in some measure to the law of the Drunkard's Search.¹

Nevertheless, there is a considerable body of what might be called "pre-theory" that clearly does have some relevance to the policy process in State. Let me deal fairly briefly with some "systems approaches" which, while often backed by enthusiastic advocates, do not seem to me as relevant as three dominant models I will subsequently discuss. Some of these "systems approaches" are actually believed - wrongly - to dominate the government's policy process² (possibly justifying Roger Hilsman's otherwise

¹ ("Why are you down on your hands and knees fumbling around the street lamppost?" "Because I lost my keys." "Where did you lose them?" "Over there." "Then why are you looking here?" "Because the light's better.")

² A clear overstatement of the role of such methods was made in an otherwise surprisingly insightful survey of U.S. crisis-management techniques by a Soviet scholar, Vitaly V. Zhurkin, now Deputy Director of the Institute for Study of the USA of the Academy of Sciences:

Throughout the last decade rigorous attempts were made to apply such scientific methods as the system approach, decision-making theory, game theory, modeling (primarily in the form of experimental simulated political-military exercises), and various statistical methods of analysis (content analysis, communications analysis, and factor analysis) to the analysis of international crises and the formulation of more effective forms for implementing the U.S. foreign policy course in these situations.

"The United States and International Political Crises"
Moscow USA: ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND IDEOLOGY,
 No. 12, December 1970

Perhaps he had read Congressman Craig Hosmer's statement (in an attack on ACDA's advocacy of the NPT) that "ACDA totally ignored the procedures by which vital national security decisions have been made for almost a decade. That is, by the computer-aided formulas of 'Systems Analysis'." February 7, 1968.

unjustifiable dictum that policy-making is so thoroughly political a process that analysis has virtually no place in it.³⁾

Systems Approaches

This heading, for our purposes, subsumes operations research, systems analysis, and formal modelling of the decisional structure by various means such as computer simulation. This general approach presupposes the ability to grasp the crucial variables in the system or sub-system; to give mathematical expression to those variables and their relation to each other; and to develop computer programs able to simulate the interaction of those elements.

E.S. Quade defined the stages for such analysis in a way that expands traditional break-downs of the Department's policy process:

Formulation (defining issues, clarifying objectives, limiting the problem)

Search (determining relevant data, looking for alternative programs of action to resolve the issue)

Explanation (building a model, using it to explore the consequences of alternative programs by estimates of cost and performance)

Interpretation (deriving conclusions and indicating a preferred alternative or course of action)

Verification (testing the conclusion by experiment)⁴

³ Roger Hilsman, To Move A Nation (New York: Delta, 1967), pp. 5-13. See also his The Politics of Policy-Making in Defense and Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

⁴ Quade, E.S. in Analysis for Military Decisions (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967). Herbert J. Spiro, in an interesting retrospective view of systems theory back to Hobbes, defines the "irreducible existential functions of political systems" as formulation, deliberation, resolution of issues, and solution of problems. "An evaluation of Systems Theory", Ch. 9 in Charlesworth, Contemporary Political Analysis, op. cit., p. 172.

In their advocacy of formal modelling in more general policy analysis, Brewer and Hall, taking off from Jay Forrester's highly influential urban dynamics model, assert that "decision-makers will increasingly resort to the most advanced scientific and management skills and techniques to attain problem solutions."⁵ There is little evidence that this is true of foreign policy-making.

Few would quarrel with the desirability of more "systematic" or "rational" policy analysis, what Under Secretary Macomber in a speech on January 14, 1971 called "the capacity for objective and penetrating analysis." The issue here is rather the application of theory and electronic aids in helping the analyst develop an ability that "selects and inter-relates facts, advances propositions, and offers conclusions."⁶ That issue remains unresolved.

The ultimate aims are to be able to reproduce electronically a rational decision-maker and to predict future behavior or policy outcomes. Raymond Tanter in the social sciences⁷ and others working in the still highly theoretical field of artificial intelligence are interested in modelling and simulating by computer a foreign-policy "decision-maker." The effort would involve programming characteristic responses so the system might react with appropriate "decisions" aided by data banks containing precedents and other information.

⁵ Garry D. Brewer and Owen P. Hall, Jr., "Policy Analysis by Computer Simulation: The Need for Appraisal," RAND paper P-4893

⁶ See Grant H. Hilliker, "Man and the Fact Machine in Foreign Affairs," Foreign Service Journal, March 1971, p. 14.

⁷ See James A. Moore and Raymond Tanter, "Computer-Aided Conflict Information System I". Prepared for delivery to American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, La., September 5, 1973.

Less ambitiously, theory has been developed and experimental systems produced to improve the process of decision-making in selected sectors such as conflict-prevention, with a recent example the CASCON⁸ system being used experimentally by the Department of State and the United Nations. Another such attempt is Hilliker's "Graphic Factor Analysis."⁹

Least ambitiously, the aim is systematically to store and retrieve information useful to policy-making. But even computerizing government archives has encountered severe problems, both of organizing in conceptually viable ways the vast quantities and varieties of information, and of retraining the potential users to depend on such a system. The crucial point here is that systematizing the "library" functions of the process is not really controversial; systematizing the process is.

Other bodies of tangentially a propos theory cum method, with a few representative names, include game theory (Shubik, Schelling) and political games (Guetzkow, Bloomfield), statistical methods of analysis such as content analysis (North, Holsti), communications theory (Pool), events data analysis (McClelland, Singer, Rummel), roll call analysis (Alker), factor analysis, and doubtless others. Of these, I shall return to political games as most immediately usable as an aid to policy planning and forecasting.

⁸

(Computer-Aided System for Information on Local Conflicts). The most accessible write-up is Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Robert R. Beattie, "Computers and Policy-Making: The CASCON Experiment," Journal of Conflict Resolution, March 1971.

⁹

"Man and the Fact Machine in Foreign Affairs", op. cit.

A major contribution of the social sciences to understanding of the policy process lies in the several models of the process that have been advanced in recent years, each representing a different conceptual framework for explaining what happens -- or should happen -- when a group of officials combine to discuss and recommend or decide about foreign policy activities.¹⁰

Elementary models were earlier offered which simply diagrammed the assignment of tasks and flow of papers in dealing with a single policy problem.¹¹ More recently, starting with the arrival of "Hitchcraft" in Secretary MacNamara's Pentagon in 1961, system-type modelling from operations research led to the application of cost-benefit analysis or PPBS (program planning and budgeting system) in increasing sectors of public policy where substantial fiscal or manpower resources were to be allocated.¹²

PPBS was extremely influential in the process of decision-making through the DOD's Office of Systems Analysis, and represented a conscious effort both to make budgets more meaningful, and to select between weapons systems on the

¹⁰ The underlying argument for the validity of this approach was made by Graham T. Allison when he wrote:

Professional analysts of foreign affairs (as well as ordinary laymen) think about problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models that have significant consequences for the content of their thought. Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 4.

¹¹ See Dean G. Pruitt, "Problem Solving in the Department of State," Social Science Foundation, University of Denver 1964-1965; also Charlton Ogburn, "The Flow of Policy-Making in the Department of State", in H. Field Haviland, Ed., The Formulation and Administration of US Foreign Policy (Washington: Brookings, 1960).

¹² See Charles J. Hitch and Roland N. McKean, The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

basis of explicit and generally "rational" calculations.¹³ But attempts in the late 60's to extend PPBS throughout the government encountered severe criticism, exemplified by Aaron Wildavsky's flat assertion that "no one knows how to do program budgeting;"¹⁴

It is clear that those who introduced the PPB system into the federal government in one fell swoop did not undertake a policy analysis on how to introduce policy analysis into the federal government.¹⁵

Arguing that other agencies of government "produce a vast amount of inchoate information characterized by premature quantification of irrelevant items",¹⁶ Wildavsky concluded that "the shotgun marriage between policy analysis and budgeting should be annulled."¹⁷

PPBS was also criticized on methodological grounds, with Yehezkel Dror, for example, modifying it to "policy analysis" whereby, through fudging conflicting values, agreement could be reached on a policy that accomplishes different objectives.¹⁸

¹³ Samuel M. Greenhouse defined eight "structural members" in PPBS' system of "accountability": objectives, programs, program alternatives, outputs, progress measurements, inputs, alternative ways, and systems analysis, "PPBS Rationale, Language, and Idea-Relationships", Public Administration Review, December 1966.

¹⁴ Wildavsky, Aaron, "Rescuing Policy Analysis from PPBS," Public Administration Review, March/April 1969, p. 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁸ "Policy Analysts: A New Professional Role in Government Service," Public Administration Review, September 1967. See also Y. Dror, Public Policy-making Reexamined (San Francisco: Chandler, 1968). Dror's thesis was criticized by Ira Sharkansky and Randall Ripley in American Political Science Review, September 1969, replied to by Dror in ibid., March 1970; see also Michael J. Shapiro in Transaction, October 1970.

Within the government, the subterranean but often volcanic opposition to PPBS and cost-effectiveness analysis sometimes exploded in plain view, as in the withering scorn of Admiral Hyman Rickover:

At one time the pagan gods ruled the world. Later the kings. Then the warriors, followed by the lawyers. Now it is cost accountants. Ultimately some measure of common sense comes into play. Events tame them.¹⁹ and relegate them to their proper place.

By the late-1960's the spirit of PPBS began to invade the foreign affairs sector. Some attempts were made to accommodate them; one specified eight basic steps that would accomplish the task: 1) Define U.S. interests in the external world. 2) Prepare a baseline forecast. 3) Specify U.S. objectives. 4) Particularize the baseline forecast. 5) Minimize the cost of pursuing the latter. 6) Minimize the cost of objectives added to baseline. 7) Minimize the cost of objectives left after selective deletion of baseline objectives. 8) Make a sensitivity analysis of the conclusions.²⁰

But in fact the most interesting literature about PPBS, and about applying systems analysis, formal game theory, and operations research methods to the

¹⁹ New York Times, June 4, 1967. Calling cost-effectiveness studies on nuclear escort ships 'exactly the same argument' used against nuclear submarines 20 years ago, Admiral Rickover denounced them as 'fog bombs' that imply 'that Congress is dense and can't understand the situation.' 'I don't believe it is Congress that is dense,' he said. 'Maybe the cost analysts are dense.'

²⁰ Blechman, Barry and James T. Holt, Cost/Effectiveness Analysis of Foreign Policy: Need, Approach, and Prospects (Arlington, Va.: CNA No. 68, March 1971.)

foreign policy process focused on their limitations in confronting the most important policy questions. The main negative argument was that foreign policy is highly charged with non-qualitative values, and alternative choices have to be adjudged in terms of a political calculus which is difficult if not impossible to express in cost-effectiveness terms²¹.

Others have criticized such methodological avenues to foreign policy decision-making as formal game theory, decision-making under uncertainty and other formal decision theories on the grounds that they cannot adequately express the real political problems at issue.²² Some focused on the issue we will look at in the next section of idealized and comprehensive analytical systems

²¹ The chief arguments were made by Professor Thomas C. Schelling in a memorandum entitled "PPBS and Foreign Affairs" prepared at the request of the Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations, 90th Congress, 1st Session, 1968; and Frederick C. Mosher in "Program Budgeting in Foreign Affairs: Some Reflections", ibid.. The application of Operations Research methods, such as mathematical modelling, to higher-level policy problems was criticized by now Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger in "Quantitative Analysis and National Security," World Politics, January, 1963.

²² See e.g. George Kent in "Presenting Foreign Policy", Research Report No. 59, Dimensionality of Nations Project, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii. Kent proposed "decomposing" large and difficult questions by following the steps of describing the problem, formulating action proposals, and evaluating alternatives, each divided into its component steps through the Simon "principle of sub-goal reduction (making progress by substituting for achievement of the desired goal the achievement of a set of easier goals)." p. 15.

versus what Braybrooke and Lindblom were teaching students of decision-making to call "disjointed incrementalism".²³

Models of the Process

It was not until the late 1960's and early 1970's that social scientists began seriously to theorize about the foreign policy process in ways that knowledgeable people saw as touching the central elements in the system they encountered in their daily routine. The chief breakthrough came with analyses of events and decisions based on the so-called Bureaucratic Politics Model (sometimes called "Governmental Politics" Model). The latter has gained rapid popularity, probably because it conveyed a powerful message to students of U.S. foreign policy and State Department operations. It had the secondary effect of throwing into sharper relief other models of the process that either had been unthinkingly accepted as adequately explanatory and even predictive, or were imperfectly translated from other fields such as economics (the Rational Utility-Maximizing Model), or business firm behavior (the Organizational Process Model, which also has roots in public administration theory).

The Rational Actor Model

The so-called Rational, Utility-Maximizing, Unitary Actor model stemmed from a blend of classical international relations theory plus formal decision theory, including game theory and bargaining theory, particularly as drawn from the notion of economic man competing in self-interested terms for a share of the market (or a monopoly). It reflected a theory of behavior in which clearly defined

²³ David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, A Strategy of Decision: Policy Evaluation as a Social Process (New York: Free Press, 1963).

goals were linked to appropriate strategies by a consciously-deciding and purposeful mind, followed by selection of appropriate policies and allocation of needed means. The combination was defined as "rational."

According to Graham Allison, the rational model stems from the utility-maximizing calculus of Thomas Hobbes. It presumes a decider; it defines policy as the realization of the decider's objectives; its target is consistency, achieved by adding rationality to purpose.

The basic concepts embodied in the notion of rational actor are: goals and objectives (which, faithful to marginal utility or "expected value" theory, have a payoff or utility or preference function); alternatives (visible on one's "decision-tree"); choice; and of course consequences. In short, the decider according to these rules makes a "consistent, value-maximizing choice within specified constraints."²⁴

Put differently, the rational method is both comprehensive and deductive — comprehensive in requiring awareness of values and objectives, and in possession of information on all relevant factors; and deductive in proceeding from clarified values and objectives to alternative policies, via explicit ends-means analysis.²⁵

Not only does classical administrative and organizational theory rest on this normative, ideal model of both institutional and group behavior. Virtually all contemporary efforts from within to reform the policy process in the Department, from the Hoover Commission through the Herter Commission, through PPBS and the AFSA and Task Forces of the early seventies, all the way to PARA and Net Assessment, have sought to make the Department more of a "rational actor" by aiming at the components of the "rational" process, from goal-setting through alternative considerations to actions explicitly linked to available resources.

²⁴ Graham Allison, Essence of Decision, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

²⁵ See Richard A. Smith, "Approaches to the Decision-Making Process" (mimeo). Also Raymond A. Bauer and Kenneth L. Gergen, eds., The Study of Policy Formation (New York: Free Press, 1968).

In a way this made perfectly good sense. Common sense tell us that most, if not all, conscious staff work and decision-making uses, in one form or another, what the process theory calls Rational. (The real issue, which I will come to in the next sections, is: what other things are also going on in the process?)

It is therefore not surprising that the most frequent elaborations of the Rational Model came not from theorists²⁶ but, with some notable exceptions, from government officials and advisers.

Thus Theodore C. Sorenson wrote rather didactically of the seven-step process White House decisions underwent: 1) agreement on the facts; 2) agreement on the overall policy objective; 3) precise definition of the problem; 4) canvassing of all possible solutions; 5) a list of the possible consequences flowing from each solution; 6) recommendation of one alternative; and 7) communication of the decision and provision for its execution.²⁷

His later Kennedy²⁸ provides ample evidence that the above represents a "pure rationality model" rather than empirically validated fact.

The central difficulty with the Rational Actor model was not in valuing orderly analysis and action. It was in the confusion between accepting the model as a guide, i.e., as normatively valid for transformation and reform of the process; and believing that it accurately described the process that actually took place. Commenting on this confusion, Graham Allison correctly said:

²⁶ Harold Lasswell was one who had expounded a "strategy of problem-solving" running neatly through goal clarification, trend description, analyses of conditions, projection of developments, inventory evaluation, and selection of alternatives. See e.g. A Pre-View of Policy Sciences (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1971).

²⁷ Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch or the Arrows (New York: Columbia, 1963)

²⁸ New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

The present hiatus in thinking about problems of foreign policy derives in large part from attempts to pursue Model I reasoning, without much self-consciousness, as the single form of analysis.²⁹

[Mea Culpa: my own annual lecture to the incoming class at the National War College on "Vital U.S. Goals and Objectives" for some years appealed for just such better, "more rational" linkages between values, assumptions, goals, objectives, strategies, policies, tactics, resources, etc. in the thinking and action of the high-level bureaucrat. See attached "Handy-Dandy Analytical Framework for Analyzing National Strategies/Foreign Policies and Structuring Strategic Doctrine, which I still believe can aid in orderly thinking about Policy.]

One really ought to face the paradox that virtually all movements for reform of the policy process have rested on Model I - the Rational Model; but virtually all recent theory about the process of decision-making is based on a pair of quite different models of behavior - the Organizational Process model and the Bureaucratic Politics model.

If any single theme characterizes the burgeoning contemporary literature about the foreign policy process, it is that the rational actor model no more reflects the real-life performance of organizations such as State than that of large business firms (indeed, the single most influential book for a whole generation of theorists about foreign policy process attacks the rational model via analysis of the behavior of the firm).³⁰

²⁹ Essence of Decision, op. cit., p. 254. Model I is the Rational Actor model (see next section).

³⁰ Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

Revised February 1973

LPB HANDY-DANDY ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
ANALYZING NATIONAL STRATEGIES/FOREIGN POLICIES
AND STRUCTURING STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

Assumptions ("Objective Constants based on history, research
gueswork analysis, forecasting techniques, etc.)

Relevant Values, i.e. General (Moral?) Principles and Broad
"National Interest" ("Subjective Constants")

Longer-term
"Strategic-level"

ENDS

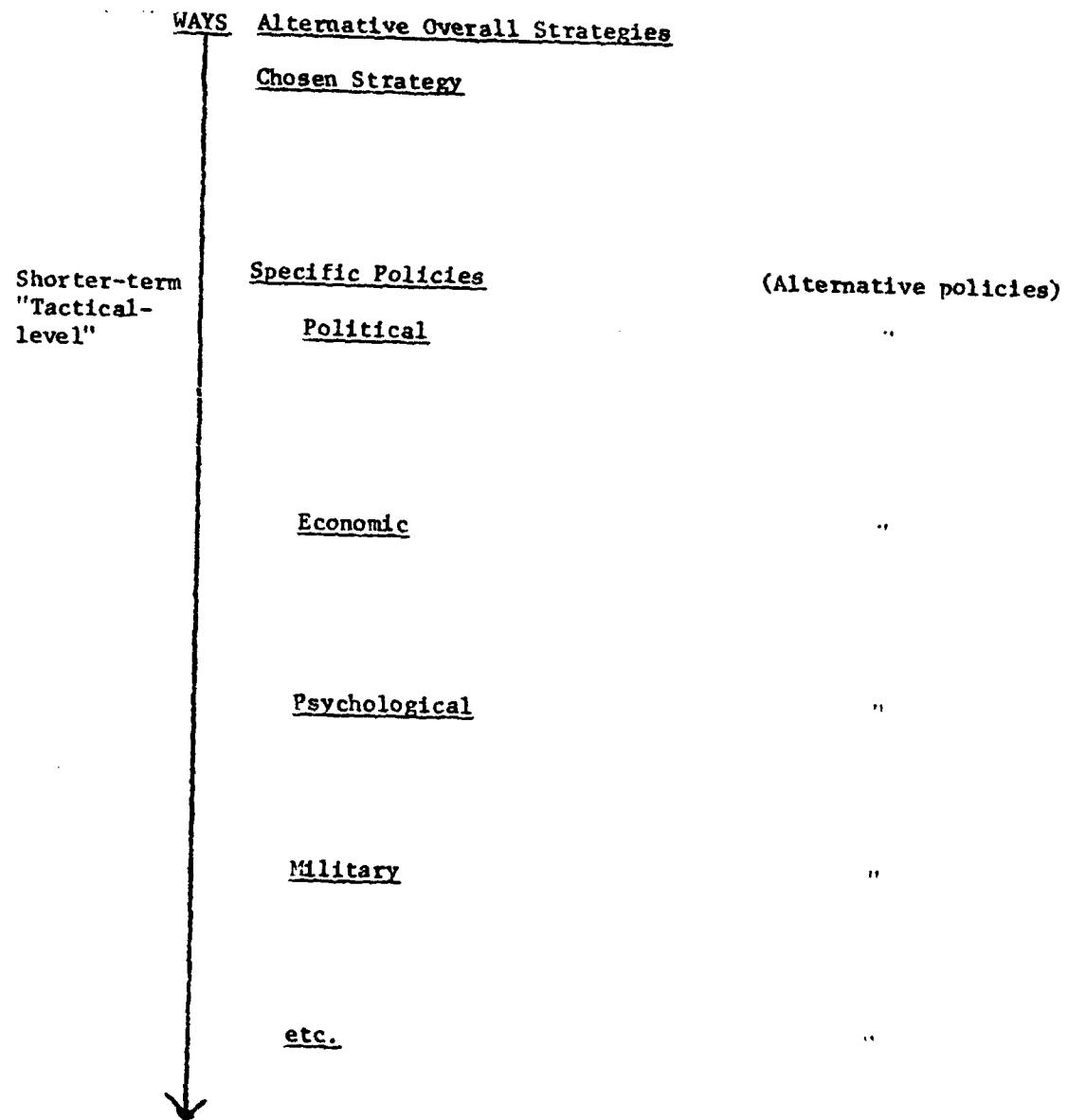
Specific "Goals" of Policy (More than 15 years)

(or "Possession" goals vs.
"Milieu" goals, after
Wolfers)

Specific "Objectives" of Policy (Less than 15 years)



Prior Commitments



MEANS

Agencies and Instrumentalities



Tactics (diplomatic, parliamentary, multilateral, etc.)

Availability of Resources

Time-Phasing

Pre-testing of Strategies
Policies

Prediction of Outcomes

Thus it can be seen that the mainstream of current theorizing, including much of the anecdotal material about foreign policy found in case studies, describes a quite different model of behavior than that on which much official reform effort rests. Under the Bureaucratic Politics Model and its associated model of Organizational Behavior (which has roots in public administration theory), foreign policy is the outcome not of the rational process described above, but of internecine struggles and negotiated bargains between lower-level actors in the process. It reflects a contest for power in which players identify their unit interests with national interest, trade off disparate policy pawns, and pull and haul in ways any bureaucrat will instantly recognize.

I cannot reconcile these two versions of reality in this survey. I can urge the reader to keep in mind the extraordinary disjunction between analyses and reforms based on the Rational Actor model, and the mounting empirical and theoretical work based on the Bureaucratic Politics model. Perhaps more than this, I can suggest the hypothesis that the rational model is generally followed by the ultimate decision-maker, such as the President or the Secretary of State, particularly where his decision is a confirmation of a recommendation worked out at lower staff levels. But in the process below the level of actual decision-maker, in hammering out that recommendation, the behavior of the actors is more likely to reflect the other two models.

In this sense advice to government officials, in War College speeches or otherwise, about greater "rationality" in the policy process, is best aimed at the handful of officials who never do attend such occasions - and remains for the great population of non-decision-makers in the bureaucracy a set of homilies which, like Sunday sermons, can enlighten but not substitute for the earthly realities.

The other models, developed as alternatives to the Rational Actor model, ought to be regarded not as denials of rationality in the acts of bureaucrats, but as additional explanations of behavior in organizations. What these other models do is illuminate the "non-rational" influences that bear on steps in the policy process, as well as the compromises real-world people make with the ideal when they work their way through the policy machinery to a point of decision.

The current use of alternative models was prefigured in the late 1950's through the pioneering work of Herbert Simon and his associates at Carnegie Institute (now Carnegie-Mellon). Simon explained how through "subjectively rational" behavior decision-makers "satisficed", that is, sought to achieve not their asserted primary goals, but alternatives or sub-goals more feasible of achievement and meeting minimally satisfactory criteria.³¹ But even more powerful notions for purposes of possible adaptation to foreign policy came from Charles E. Lindblom, who made the definitive scholarly statement of how administrators in fact make decisions. In 1959, when he wrote his path-breaking article on the subject,³² the literature on policy formulation and decision-making virtually without exception espoused, openly or tacitly, the Rational Actor model. Today, thanks in part at least to Lindblom and his influence, virtually all theoretical and scholarly literature on those subjects represents one form or another of critique of that model.

The gist of Lindblom's theory is that, unlike the hypothesized "rational-comprehensive-deductive" model according to which decision-makers make a total search of rationally-plausible alternatives and examine the roots of policy

³¹ See Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1957). Also James G. March and Herbert Simon, Organizations (New York: Wiley, 1958), and James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

³² Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," Public Administration Review, Spring 1959.

choices, in fact they use a method of "successive-limited comparisons" -- what he labels "disjointed incrementalism" -- which deals not with roots but with branches. In his world the deduction from desired values and goals -- which is the heart of the rational process-- in reality cannot be separated from the actor's empirical analysis of the situation. As the actor does this over time, his goals always interacting with his real-life situational needs and constraints, policies are continuously revised. (Given the durability of some general strategies and major policies, I always found the latter conclusion somewhat of a hole in an otherwise persuasive line of argument.³³)

Lindblom sums up his case thusly:

Theorists often ask the administrator to go the long way round to the solution of his problems; in effect ask him to follow the best canons of scientific method, when the administrator knows that the best available theory will work less well than more modest incremental comparisons.³⁴

Another major impetus to the "revisionism" that has overtaken theorizing and model-building about policy process is an analysis by two more of the Simon school-- Cyert and March.³⁵ In a work that probably never mentions foreign policy but has become widely relied on by the new theorists of policy-making, notably its concept of "bounded rationality", Cyert and March viewed organizations essentially as coalitions of participants with disparate demands and changing

³³ Amitai Etzioni argued for a middle ground through a "system model" in "Mixed Scanning: A Third Approach to Decision-Making," Public Administration Review, December 1967.

³⁴ "The Science of Muddling Through," op. cit., p. 87.

³⁵ Cyert and March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm, op. cit.

foci of attention plus a limited ability to attend to all problems simultaneously. Taking the three major categories of organization activities ("goals", "expectations", and "choices"), they outlined four "core concepts" that tied together the variables: 1) Quasi-Resolution of Conflict, 2) Uncertainty avoidance (i.e. solving pressing problems rather than developing long-run strategies; using decision rules that emphasize short-run feedback; negotiating with the environment), 3) Problemistic Search (limited to the particular problem), and 4) Organizational learning (adaptation over time).³⁶

With these influences in mind, we turn to the "alternative" models.

The Organizational Process Model

Drawing heavily on Simon, Lindblom, and Cyert and March, plus earlier organizational theorists such as Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Chester Barnard, and F. J. Roethlisberger, the outlines appeared of a theory of organization behavior in which the end product, which Rational-Model-makers call in voluntaristic terms "acts" and "choices", are better described as outputs of a dynamic process that characteristically takes place in large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior. In the realm of public policy the "unit of analysis" under the Rational Model (Allison's Model I), which assumes a unitary actor, is "governmental choice." Under the Organization Process Model, as indicated, action takes the form of "organization output." Under this Model (Allison's Model II) the chief analytical elements to be considered in the system are thus organizational actors, "factored problems" and "fractionated power", parochial priorities and perceptions, sequential

³⁶ Here as elsewhere I have borrowed from Graham Allison, who is extremely helpful. See Essence of Decision, op. cit.

attention to goals (which are seen as constraints defining acceptable performance in and by the organization), Standard Operating Procedures, central coordination and control, and decisions by leaders.³⁷

In this version of policy behavior the key notions remained essentially those originally suggested by Simon, such as "bounded rationality" in real life, contrasted with the "comprehensive rationality" of ideally "rational" behavior; satisficing; search routines that stop with the first "good enough" alternative; uncertainty avoidance; and the standard repertoires of organizations known in the jargon as 'SOP's'.

Probably the bulk of internal reform efforts in the foreign policy apparatus have centered on organizational factors. For example, the 1971 Task Force reports flagged failures in inter-agency coordination as reflecting management weaknesses. Others have sought the levers which spell effective control, linked to coordination of the parts. I.M. Destler chronicles eleven general types of post-war solutions to this chronic problem, and demonstrates in the process the high inconsistency among these "solutions." He regards some of these organizational-type solutions as "covers" for the real and contending political forces at issue.³⁸ And indeed evidence for the underlying premises of organization theory can be found in the reality of clashing interests anchored in the disparate concerns of bureaus, agencies or departments all allegedly harnessed to identical goals.

³⁷ For application of the model to budgeting see A. Wildavsky, The Politics of the Budgetary Process (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964).

³⁸ I.M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy - The Politics of Organizational Reform (Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 46ff.

Writing of the Skybolt controversy, Halperin says "we can make no greater mistake than to assume that the participants in the process look at the issue in the same way." He goes on:

Organizational interests ... are for many a dominant factor in determining the face of the issue which they see.

His moral is that leaders should understand that organizational interests affect policy in terms of 1) information inputs, 2) the presentation of options, 3) freedom to choose options, and 4) implementation of policy.³⁹

This in turn surfaces a crucial issue in this concept. For its central contention, in operational terms, is that the alternative policy favored by each organization (which I take to mean sub-units also) reflects each organization's (or sub-unit) interest in controlling the situation rather than what Model I considers to be objective choices. Several observers note the tendency inherent in such behavior, and familiar to us all, to serve up the desired alternative framed by two obviously unacceptable extremes ("all-out war, surrender, and what I propose").

Destler goes further, urging organizational reforms in foreign affairs machinery aimed at reducing to less threatening proportions other problems arising out of 'organizational behavior.' These he identifies as the nature of decisions as compromises between people with narrow perspectives; issues being resolved piecemeal; dangerous diversion from problems of the international environment to play the necessary intra-governmental political games; the bias

³⁹ Morton H. Halperin, "Why Bureaucrats Play Games," Foreign Policy, Spring 1971, pp. 72, 74, 88-89.

of the overall system against change; its resistance to central control and coordination; and its clumsiness in responding to unique situations. (He recommends that the government sponsor external research that asks how to redesign both organization and procedures to 'sub-optimize' within the system.⁴⁰

There is great difficulty in defining goals under this set of theoretical approaches. I mentioned that interests of the players differ, apart from a shared common interest in the survival and well-being of the nation (which can be interpreted as synonymous with a given agency or bureau's position). This means that specific goals and objectives will differ (goals often defined as taking longer than fifteen years to achieve, objectives achievable within fifteen).

I myself know of no element of the policy process less susceptible to sound analysis. Some of the schemes for more 'rational' policy process such as PARA and Net Assessment tended to take as givens the very goal statements most in need of fresh analysis.⁴¹ (I come back to this very real issue under the heading of Planning.) There may be a suggestive analogy to the Department of State process in the organization theory literature. Laurence B. Mohr does not apply his goals research in the administrative sciences to foreign policy, but some of his insights might be very suggestive given the extreme difficulty the foreign policy process has with the refinement and

⁴⁰ Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 82.

⁴¹ A point well taken by Henry T. Nash in American Foreign Policy - Response To A Sense of Threat (Homewood: Dorsey, 1973), p. 203. Of course the problem remains unsolved of a State Department full of analysts who declared Presidential objectives to be, upon analysis, infeasible.

specification of policy goals.⁴²

Most recently organization theorists have been trying to break out of old molds by taking the premises of Model II and "sub-optimizing" them (to use the current jargon). Of particular interest here is the work of Alexander George and his principle of "Multiple Advocacy." George sees structural arrangements as instrumental in curing the perceived defects in foreign policy decision-making. But he rejects the "reorganization" approach as such:

There appears to be no single structural formula by means of which the chief executive and his staff can convert the functional expertise and diversity of viewpoints of the many offices concerned with international affairs into consistently effective policies and decisions.⁴³

Under the George system the chief foreign policy official would be a "magistrate who listens in a structured setting to different, well-prepared advocates, making the best case for alternative options." What this perhaps idealized version of the NSC staff system requires to materialize is management to create the basis for structured, balanced debate among policy advocates drawn from different parts of the organization.⁴⁴

We will return to this matter in discussing both planning and related research in other fields. Suffice it here that along with George other organization theorists such as Warren Bennis, Philip E. Slater, Alvin Toffler, and Charles Perrow, are seeking new combinations of organization-cum-process to overcome the known constrictions which the bureaucratic setting imposes on the end product. At the outer margin of relevant theorizing may be found

⁴² See Laurence B. Mohr, "The Concept of Organizational Goal," American Political Science Review, June 1973.

⁴³ Alexander L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," American Political Science Review, September 1972, p. 766.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 751.

Harlan Cleveland's suggestion for a type of structuring that radically departs from those we know, in order to get things done:

The organizations that get things done will no longer be hierarchical pyramids with most of the real control at the top. There will be systems - interlaced webs of tension in which control is loose, power diffused, and centers of decision plural. ⁴⁵

The Bureaucratic Politics Model⁴⁶

It is now widely recognized that organizations operate through webs of relationships far more complicated than formal charts depict; that executive branch officials are not just "neutral" implementers of "policies" handed down by their superiors but play ongoing, day-to-day roles in shaping these policies; and that the typical way the government settles on particular courses of action is not through a group of high officials applying a rational design to specific problems, but by a "pluralistic" process of political competition and compromise involving "players" both inside and outside the government. ⁴⁷

If this, the most widely theorized-about descriptive model of State Department behavior, strikes today's thoughtful working bureaucrat as belaboring the obvious, the reason is that it does. Yet, as I noted earlier, no more than fifteen years ago almost all theoretical literature about governmental decisional processes automatically embodied the Rational Actor Model. Moreover,

⁴⁵ Harlan Cleveland, The Future Executive - A Guide for Tomorrow's Managers (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 13.

⁴⁶ Its most recent exponents (Allison and Halperin) prefer to call it a "conceptual scheme", "framework", or "analytical paradigm" (after Merton) rather than a "model", but it is probably too late to turn around Allison's many enthusiastic model-followers.

⁴⁷ I.M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 41.

as also noted, virtually all reforms advocated or implemented internally still tend to assume the same model. My point remains that much decisional behavior is "rational" in that model's terms, but cannot be adequately explained without reference to the alternative models as well.

Thomas Kuhn is probably the best source as to why one dominant "paradigm" eventually replaces another in the world of science.⁴⁸ It may be dignifying the political field too much to analogize to natural science, but perhaps not. Social science has for some years believed that it ought to corroborate pure intuitions and challenge normative judgment with data-based empirical theories, and the explorers of Bureaucratic Politics Theory have done just that. Their theorizing comes not from norms they necessarily value, but chiefly from empirical case studies about how certain key decisions were in fact made. As individuals have left the Executive Branch in recent years, they have contributed substantially to the body of analysis that ties observed or recollected behavior of foreign policy-makers with newer canons of theory.

In a sense this Model III can be regarded as a refinement or extension of the Organizational Model (II). In essence, it sees foreign policy products as outcomes of a bureaucratic-political process in which bargaining takes place among players positioned hierarchically in the government.⁴⁹ The basic unit of analysis is actions, through action channels, with decisions taking place along the way. Policy represents not outcomes, but "authoritative aspirations", internal to a government, about outcomes. The imagery of games is central to

⁴⁸ The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970).

⁴⁹ Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision, op. cit., pp. 144ff.

this model. "Decision games" are played in converting various activities into decisions; "policy games" are played in the process of converting activities into policy; "action games" describe the interactive process of activities that follow decisions. The "unitary actor" is replaced by the pluralistic players whose stands are derived from parochial priorities and perceptions, goals, interests, stakes, deadlines, and perspectives.

The governing questions are: "who plays?" "what determines the stands players take?" (Don Price is credited with the much-quoted "where you stand depends on where you sit"), and "how are those stands aggregated in the shape of governmental decisions and actions?"⁵⁰

The basic concepts involved, apart from the notion of elite players involved in a competitive game of bargaining based on hierarchical position and organizational power, are spelled out by Destler: 1) diverse values and goals generating alternate policies and means; 2) issues as a "flow", arising bit by bit over time; 3) constraints, channels and maneuvers leading to consensus-building and coalitions; and 4) policy as a bureaucratic political outcome, incrementally 'a la Lindblom complete with zigs and zags.⁵¹

The Bureaucratic Politics model began to enter the foreign policy scholarly literature with a 1959 article by Roger Hilsman entitled, "The Foreign Policy Consensus: An Interim Research Report"⁵², a 1960 article by

⁵⁰ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," in Richard Ullman and Raymond Tanter, eds., Theory and Practice in International Relations (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 46-47. This outstanding article contains a valuable catalogue of action precepts.

⁵¹ Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp. 55ff.

⁵² Journal of Conflict Resolution, December 1959 (and later in To Move A Nation).

Samuel Huntington,⁵³ and early writings of Richard Neustadt,⁵⁴ all involving criticism of the then-dominant Rational Actor Model. Other contributors to the growing debate included Gabriel Almond in his classic American People and Foreign Policy,⁵⁵ Lindblom, and again Lindblom and Braybrooke, cited earlier; Warner Schilling in his analysis of the 1950 defense budget,⁵⁶ and Burton Sapin, Don Price, and others.

The debate went fully public, so to speak, with the seminal analysis, referred to numerous times in this survey, of Graham T. Allison, eventually published as Essence of Decision. By "processing" well-done interview data on U.S. decision-making in the Cuban Missile Crisis through the intellectual and methodological filters of the three chief behavior models, Allison threw into sharp relief the very different perspectives available to analysts in the search for better explanation - and prediction - of decisional behavior.

53 "Strategic Planning and the Political Process," Foreign Affairs, January 1960, and also The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

54 See Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership (New York: Wiley, 1960).

55 (New York: Praeger, 1960.)

56 In Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond and Glenn H. Snyder, Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

The Allison breakthrough was followed by John D. Steinbruner's Ph.D. thesis at M.I.T. on the Multilateral Force case, using Allison's three process models plus a fourth - the "Cognitive Processing Model,"⁵⁷ and by the insightful and provocative articles by Halperin, and Allison and Halperin, referred to above.

Harlan Cleveland in his newest book argues that bureaucratic politics represents not just a theory of behavior, but a general trend in all organizations "away from the more formal, hierarchical, order-giving way of doing business and toward the more informal, fluid workways of bargaining, brokerage, advice and consent."⁵⁸ But already the critiques of bureaucratic politics theory are emerging. Robert Rothstein, for instance, believes something essential and unique is lost in adapting to foreign affairs the standard propositions concerning informal bureaucratic behavior.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the school pressing this model has strong credentials and persuasive partial explanations of recent history (see below for Cases). Above all, it has the metaphysical advantage of a "Haunted House Doctrine."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See The Mind and Milieu of Policy-Makers: A Case Study of the MLF, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, M.I.T. Political Science Department, February 1968.

⁵⁸ The Future Executive, op. cit. Cleveland writes:

...when you hear an associate explaining to his staff the principle of constructive ambiguity, put him down as an executive for the world of tomorrow. (p. 24)

⁵⁹ Planning, Prediction and Policy-Making in Foreign Affairs: Theory and Practice (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 205.

⁶⁰ If I say a house is haunted, and you go in and look around and don't see any ghosts, all I have to say is "You see, they won't come out when you're looking," or, more simply, "How can you be sure?"

The Psychological Approach: Attitudes and Interpersonal Relations

A. In all fairness, I was not the one to stand up in a meeting and say that this should be stopped ... so ... I kind of drifted along.

Q. What did you do about it?

A. I did not do anything.

Q. Why didn't you?

A. In all honesty, probably because of the fear of group pressure that would ensue of not being a team player.

Testimony before Senate Select Committee
on Watergate by Herbert L. Porter, (New
York Times, June 8, 1973)

No survey of theorizing relevant to the policy process can evade the analyses of phenomena of individual and group behavior. The Department of State is, after all, a collection of human beings. The policy process is of course in part a set of S.O.P.s and known routines, established by authority and by tradition, and employing understood modes of communication.

But it is people who, after becoming acculturated, propel the machinery. Their behavior in groups corresponds, in broadly recognizable ways, to the behavior of other human collectives interacting with each other to produce a common intellectual product. The behavior embedded in the steps of that process, i.e. issue-recognition, discussion, initiative, proposal, argumentation, compromise, and acceptance are probably as well understood as human small group phenomena as they are qua steps in a more abstract dynamic sequence called the "policy process."

There exists an extensive scholarly literature on small-group behavior and dynamics. The special element of that behavior that seems most potentially illuminating for our purposes can be summed up as consensus pressure.

The pressures on individual members of small groups to conform to the apparent or emerging will of the majority in the group are of course notorious. Perhaps the classic research was by S.E. Asch, who studied the personal and social conditions that induce individuals to resist or to yield to group pressures even "when the latter are perceived to be contrary to fact" - a phenomenon that has become known as the "Asch Effect."⁶¹ It should be noted that, unlike the usual stereotyped belief, some of Asch's subjects acted contrary to the majority and on the basis of their independent judgment, despite pressures for consensus. The majority, however, did not.

The fact of consensus pressures in hierarchically-structured organization, as well as in peer groups raises profound questions about the objectivity of the decisions or collective recommendations arrived at in the policy process. Even if taken as a given, it is important to be aware of its workings to spot potentially dangerous erosion in the independent thinking on which sound group recommendations depend. The reported reticence of Departmental and other government officials to voice their misgivings before the Bay of Pigs fiasco, or at certain decision points in the Indochina War, hardly served the broader national interest, however understandable the unwillingness to go out on a limb.

I shall have something to say under Planning on correctives to this danger. Here I simply point to a substantial body of possibly relevant theoretical material in the area of small group behavior⁶² and group dynamics.⁶³ It seems

⁶¹ See. S.E. Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure Upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments," originally published in Harold Guetzkow, ed., Groups, Leadership and Men (Pittsburgh: Carnegie, 1951).

⁶² Irving Janis cites as pioneers on the power of face-to-face groups to set norms that influence members: Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead, early sociologists; William Graham Sumner; Kurt Lewin, the social psychologist who emphasized group cohesiveness in group dynamics; Wilfred Bion; Leon Festinger, who studied "cognitive dissonance"; Harold Kelley, Stanley Schachter and Dorwin Cartwright.

⁶³ For application to policy-making in government see particularly the works of Karl Deutsch, Alexander George, and Joseph de Rivera.

undeniable that at least some of this work is directly applicable to failures (or successes) of the policy process within the government.

Irving Janis has pulled together a good many of these insights in Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decision and Fiascoes.⁶⁴

In the spirit of Nietzsche, who said that madness is the exception in individuals but the rule in groups, Janis' hypothesis is that the source of trouble is to be found not in individuals or organizations, but in "cohesive groups", even the most conscientious among them, in which "subtle constraints" operate.

His analysis spells out six major defects of decision-making that contribute to failures to solve problems adequately: (1) limited range of alternatives, (2) failure to reexamine the majority preference regarding unconsidered negatives, (3) neglect of actions originally unsatisfactory to group, (4) ignoring experts on cost-benefits, (5) selective bias toward factual information, outside experts, and media, (6) too little attention to the hazards of possible bureaucratic inertia, sabotage, or accidents.⁶⁵

Janis postulates three fairly devastating hypotheses about the consequences of this phenomenon that are worth quoting in full:

The more amiability and esprit de corps among the members of a policy-making group, the greater is the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by group-think, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed against outgroups.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1967)

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

Members of any small cohesive group tend to maintain esprit de corps by unconsciously developing a number of shared illusions and related norms that interfere with critical thinking and reality-testing.⁶⁷

The more cohesive the group and the more relevant the issue to the goals of the group, the greater is the inclination of the members to reject a nonconformist.⁶⁸

Janis observes these defects to appear in eight symptoms which his research persuades him contribute substantially to failures to solve problems adequately: illusion of invulnerability, collective effort to rationalize, sense of inherent morality, stereotype of enemy, pressure on dissenters, self-censorship, emergence of self-appointed "mindguards."⁶⁹

The heart of the Janis thesis is thus that the often valued phenomena of agreed norms and esprit de corps are in fact enemies of independent critical thinking, and may lead to irrational and potentially destructive "groupthink" based on shared illusions. But he adds that the "groupthink" hypothesis and its associated theory do not replace the usual explanations of policy disasters, but helpfully supplement them.

Alexander George in his interesting work on "multiple advocacy" (discussed under "Planning") cites Bower as demonstrating that the quality of the search and analysis steps crucial to a rational decisional process may be significantly improved by disagreements in the group; conversely, groups are less successful problem-solvers when they are concerned solely with "what is best for the

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 197ff.

group."⁷⁰ In the same spirit he cites Maier and associates on the proposition that conflict within a group can have a constructive effect on the quality of its choices.⁷¹

The other relevant strain of attitudinal theorizing about policy process, rather than focusing on the group, centers on individual attitudes, perceptions, personality types, belief systems, "sets", and cultural molds.

An attempted bridge between group and individual behavior in the State Department setting was Argyris' possibly tactless yet officially-sponsored analysis of the State Department's "living system" which adduced interesting evidence of qualities that contributed to what Argyris deemed "marginal ineffectiveness."⁷² The norms Argyris reported observing in action (norms of behavior which he says Department personnel also agreed they recognized) were "a tendency to withdraw from open discussion of interpersonal difficulties and conflict," and lack of openness about "substantive issues that can be threatening to people especially superiors and peers."⁷³

⁷⁰ See Alexander L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," op. cit. The work he refers to is Joseph L. Bower, "The Role of Conflict in Economic Decision-Making Groups: Some Empirical Results," Quarterly Journal of Economics, May 1965, p. 757.

⁷¹ N.R.F. Maier, Problem-Solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups (Belmont: Brooks/Cole, 1970). See also Rothstein, op. cit., on this same general thesis, p. 49.

⁷² Chris Argyris, Some Causes of Organizational Ineffectiveness Within the Department of State, Occasional Paper No. 2, Center for International Systems Research, Department of State, Publication No. 8180, January 1967. ✓

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 4,5.

Argyris saw the consequent withdrawal from confrontation as generating several damaging psychological effects, such as lowering of self-trust and self-confidence, and increasing some feeling of personal failure and guilt.⁷⁴

At a more theoretical level Bonham and Shapiro have recently reported research based on their theory that beliefs of foreign policy decision-makers are central to the study of decision outputs since they represent the officials' congealed experience and "expectations". His "cognitive map" will reveal the causal linkages between "affective concepts", "cognitive concepts", and "policy concepts." This all should help policy officials improve their theories about international politics.⁷⁵

Down at the least theoretical level, but with some authoritative empirical insights into problems arising in the process, is found Professor Neustadt's assertion that the principal policy-makers in the Skybolt and Suez fiascoes were characterized by "muddled perceptions, stifled communications, disappointed expectations (and) paranoid reactions."⁷⁶

Snyder, Bruck and Sapin constructed their basic framework of foreign policy decision-making from sources in sociology and social psychology, resting in part on perceptions of decision-makers and their "definition of the situation."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁵ Michael J. Shapiro and G. Matthew Bonham, "Cognitive Processes and Foreign Policy Decision-Makers," International Studies Quarterly, June 1973, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Richard E. Neustadt, Alliance Politics (New York: Columbia, 1970), p. 56.

⁷⁷ Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck, Burton Sapin, Eds., Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Glencoe: Free Press, 1962).

Others drew on equivalent sources to explain process. Leventhal, in a critical case study, saw the sources of action not in "incompetence" or accidents of timing, "nor were those actions unconnected or capricious. (They were) natural consequences of the attitudes and assumptions with which American officials" approached the problem.⁷⁸

Earlier Anthony Downs in his study of bureaucracy suggested personnel typologies which he argued showed the relation of type to motive ("purely self-interested" officials were divided among "climbers" and "conservers" while those with mixed motives included "zealots", "advocates", and "statesmen.")⁷⁹

Another approach to psychological elements in the policy process is found in Steinbruner's Cognitive Processing model, derived from cognitive psychology, in which the individual actor is treated as an "information processor."⁸⁰

Finally, much can, I think, be learned from Robert Jervis' extraordinarily insightful "hypotheses on misperception", based on wide historical evidence; each represents a warning signal to foreign policy operators operating as "information processors", as small group members, and as individuals with

⁷⁸ Abraham F. Leventhal, The Dominican Intervention (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 270.

⁷⁹ Anthony Downs, Inside Bureaucracy (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), pp. 88-111.

⁸⁰ See John D. Steinbruner, Some Effects of Decision Procedures on Policy Outcomes: A Series of Experiments Using Policy Games, M.I.T. Center for International Studies, Publication No. C/70-9, February 1970.

built-in mechanisms aimed at internal stability, sometimes at the cost of grievously transforming the true content of data received concerning their professional concerns.⁸¹

Unlike some of the descriptive or purely diagnostic analysis, writers in this realm seem to have been freer with prescriptions for corrective action, possibly because psychologists and psychiatrists, unlike empirical social scientists, are openly in the business of prescribing therapy. Some recommendations in this realm are found in the final chapter.

The Information Aspect of the Process

Two major criticisms of the policy process focus on the information input end of the equation, and should be considered at least briefly. 1) First is the rather more straightforward issue of information availability and handling. The Bendix report to the Department evaluating the PARA system⁸² criticizes the lack of any general system for following and organizing the progress of low-priority events. The Bendix contractors recommend setting up "Monitoring Files" based on PARA categories. (I myself question the desirability of structuring computerized Department files by analogy to PARA.) This of course raises the question, not really within my purview here, of systematizing the torrent of information that comes in, along with the institutional memory where it is stored. I will only say that the key to that problem seems to lie in bridging the still unbridged gap between the

⁸¹ Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," World Politics 1968 (XX).

⁸² PARA: Process, Problems and Potential, Project PARES Final Report, BSR 3369, July 1972, Social Sciences Department, Bendix Aerospace Systems Division, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

efficient, systems-trained librarian's impulse to index and store data to reflect the full complexity of the world, versus busy and impatient substantive users who want a system they can easily use, with categories that are familiar, yet substantively sophisticated beyond the usual capability of the 'sub-culture' charged with 'computerizing files'. The task remains to match the two values operationally, perhaps by mixing the two 'sub-cultures'.

Some interesting social science-related research seeks to give computers an English-language capability for bridging the gap between machines and officials speaking with normal vocabulary and syntax. There is work planned at M.I.T. to do this in the field of foreign affairs⁸³ drawing on theoretical work in both artificial intelligence and computer science, using CASCON as the data source.

The reference to CASCON (Computer-Aided System for Handling Information on Local Conflicts)⁸⁴ reflects the existence of a growing array of computerized data systems designed to improve both the information quality and the memory-based analytical stage of the foreign policy process. I can only refer briefly to other work on conflict and events data by scholars such as McClelland, Singer, Russett, Alker, Azar, Coplin, et al. The most avant-garde research, as mentioned in the introduction, seeks to actually simulate behavior of nations or decision-makers in conflict situations, and is not far enough along to treat here in

83 Doctoral dissertation in progress by G. Allen Moulton.

84 See Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Robert R. Beattie, "Computers and Policy-Making: The CASCON Experiment," op. cit., and for operational use, CASCON II - User's Manual, M.I.T. Center for International Studies, Publication No. C/71-10. August 1971.

any detail.⁸⁵

2) The other critique is more troublesome, going as it does to one of the primary functions of the trained FSO — political reporting.

I confess to holding the initial assumption, doubtless based on imperfect memory, that one element of the policy process not particularly requiring repair was the political reporting both by the foreign service and by intelligence-gathering agencies.

But it is necessary to take seriously charges of a generalized lack in political reporting of systematic analysis grounded in appropriate theory, and even lack of coherent perspectives concerning broad trends and system-level, rather than purely local, developments.

One of the case studies recently commissioned by the Department is devastating on the subject of reporting from the field. Centering on immediate events and personalities, using unanalyzed material, dealing in summary form only with the consequences of alternatives that might be chosen, the reporting Einaudi sampled was restricted to "today's or last week's events, rather than broader trends or movements. ...only rarely did reports attempt to relate the material in question to the broader issues at hand. References to trends ... were generally made without systematic analysis."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See, e.g. CACIS of the University of Michigan, reported by James A. Moore and Raymond Tanter in "Computer-Aided Conflict Information System I" op. cit.

⁸⁶ Luigi Einaudi, Assistance to Peru: A Case Study, 1963-68, p. 42.

Another excellent INR-sponsored study (of the U.S.-Soviet civil air agreement) also found the usual characteristics of specialized bureaucracies "aggravated by the community's primitive understanding of the 'other side.'"⁸⁷ Numbers of academic critics urge applying to overseas political reporting the Bureaucratic Politics Model, which they argue would illuminate the behavior, both observed and predicted, of the government under scrutiny. Still other academic critics focus on the lack of a "systematic map" of analytical reporting, and Richard Neustadt, Andrew Marshall and Graham Allison all have concrete proposals along these lines.

The point all make is cogently summed up by that superb observer Charles Darwin, that no one could be a good observer unless he was an active theorizer. I must confess that one of the things that overcame my own skepticism about these criticisms was a statement by an official of the Inspector-General corps that IG was very dissatisfied with the quality of current political reporting.

A final point of concern is the possible skewing of presumably objective diplomatic and intelligence estimates by the phenomenon, noted in the last section, of "cognitive dissonance". A good recent statement of the problem is by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in his first press conference:

And there is the tendency of most intelligence services -- and, indeed of most senior officials; and, indeed, of some newspapermen -- to fit the facts into existing preconceptions and to make them consistent with what is anticipated ... there is probably a tendency to make observed facts fit your preconceived theories. This is one of⁸⁸ the gravest dangers of all intelligence assessments.

⁸⁷ Hans Heymann, Jr., The U.S.-Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception To Inauguration: A Case Study, prepared for the Department of State, R-1047-DOS, July 1972, p. vii. See also Rothstein's complaint that "the FSO is not trained to perform (observing and reporting) systematically." op. cit., p. 38.

⁸⁸ Press conference October 12, 1973, Department of State News Release, (cont'd)

Some recommendations for possibly beneficial applied research in this domain are to be found in the final chapter.

The Planning Component

I must admit bias at the outset in discussing this crucial element of the process, since I have been publicly critical of the weaknesses of the long-range planning capability of the U.S. government in foreign affairs. New steps are reported to strengthen the Department's Policy Planning capacity which was severely foreshortened in 1969 when S/P was abolished and S/PC set up with a much reduced planning arm. On verra.

Regardless of its fluctuating fortunes, the planning function has suffered over a 27-year period from problems which increasingly look structural and deep-seated. They are exemplified by two statements. The first is by the master of classical diplomacy, Sir Harold Nicolson, who argued that there

p. 10. A related point of course is the distillation of significant information out of the mass of incoming signals, a capacity crucial to the national security that was brilliantly analyzed by Roberta Wohlstetter in Pearl Harbor; Warning and Decision (Stanford Univer., 1962).

Connected to this classic problem is the failure noted by Harvey de Weerd: "It was not the absence of intelligence which led us into trouble but our unwillingness to draw unpleasant conclusions from it", in "Strategic Surprise in the Korean War," Orbis, 1962, 6, p. 451.

really can be no planning in foreign affairs:

Nobody who has not watched 'policy' expressing itself in day-to-day action, can realize how seldom is the course of events determined by deliberately planned purpose, or how often what in retrospect appears to have been a fully conscious intention was at the time governed and directed by that most potent of all factors - 'the chain of circumstance'. Few indeed are the occasions on which any statesman sees his objective clearly before him and marches toward it with undeviating stride; numerous indeed are the occasions when a decision or an event, which at the time seemed wholly unimportant, leads almost fortuitously to another decision which is no less incidental, until, link by link, the chain of circumstance is forged.⁸⁹

The other telling (and ironic) quotation is from the man who presided over S/P in what is commonly regarded as its heyday. Speaking of his role, George Kennan wrote:

... there were times when I felt like a court jester, expected to enliven discussion, privileged to say the shocking things, valued as an intellectual gadfly on hides of slower colleagues, but not to be taken fully seriously when it came to the final, responsible decisions of policy.⁹⁰

The tension that has always existed between planning and operations in the Department is endemic to many other organizations as well. It is natural, and not a bad thing up to the point where in a kind of Gresham's Law

⁸⁹ The Congress of Vienna of National Power, p. 106)

(Quoted by Sprouts in Foundations

⁹⁰ Memoirs, 1925-1950, (Boston: Little Brown, 1967) p. 427.

"operations drives out planning". Who defines "relevance" is a crucial determinant, and in any conceivable real-life situation it will continue to be true, as Destler wrote (and some noted theorists learned when they joined the government):

The strategic thinker remains an exclamation point in the margins of foreign policy-making if he does not join the bureaucratic battles to give operational meaning and effect to general objectives.⁹¹

Certainly some insights are shed on this problem by the analysis of bureaucratic consensus pressures in hierarchical organizational structures, discussed below and reinforced by the great majority of anecdotal writings about the decision-making process in recent years when it was under strain -- precisely the time consensus pressures mount and "deviant" views are decreasingly tolerated.⁹²

This is not the place to diagnose the substantive problem in detail; but my own hypothesis is that three functions essential to successful policy-planning are weak or non-existent: middle and long-range, as contrasted with short-range thinking; explicit forecasting, using the growing arsenal of inter -

⁹¹ I.M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 139.

⁹² See, as examples Chester L. Cooper, The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970) and David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (New York: Random House, 1974), and Townsend Hoopes, The Limits of Intervention (New York: David McKay, 1969).

disciplinary tools; and adversary arguments in-house that go to first-order assumptions when necessary.

If my definition of the problem so far is accepted, there is some available theorizing that might be relevant to analyzing possible structural defects in the setting and premises of State Department policy planning.

1) The issues of longer-term thinking and of forecasting converge in the generalized sense that the system is not good at anticipating longer-term trends and developments, and that the United States is constantly caught by surprise, or ill-equipped to deal with change. One may quarrel with the details of this diagnosis; but it is so widespread, both in and out of government,⁹³ that for our purposes it is worth accepting as an arguable premise.

Some earlier work on forecasting theories and techniques, such as the Scenarios of Herman Kahn⁹⁴ and the Delphi Technique of Gordon and Helmer⁹⁵ were suggestive but hardly powerful enough to overcome the entirely natural

⁹³ See for example the assertion by Task Force XIII that the Department does least well in anticipating events. Diplomacy for the 70's, A Program of Management Reform for the Department of State (Department of State Publication 8851, December 1970), p. 553.

⁹⁴ See Chapter 5, "Some Strange Aids to Thought," Thinking about the Unthinkable (New York: Horizon, 1962).

⁹⁵ T. J. Gordon and Olaf Helmer, Report on a Long-Range Forecasting Study, RAND paper P-2982, September 1964.

predominance of seemingly urgent short-run requirements and perspectives.

Other disciplines offered econometric modelling⁹⁶, technological assessment and forecasting,⁹⁷ and techniques for deriving "social indicators"⁹⁸ but without persuasive linkages to the problems faced by the Department of State in its principal areas of concern.

A more recent effort, by Professor Choucri of M.I.T. and Dr. Thomas Robinson of RAND, seeks to bring together a wide range of theory and technique in the specific focus of foreign policy and international relations forecasting.⁹⁹ A selection of other chapter headings suggests the breadth of possible approaches.

Criteria for Valid Forecasting

The Use of Expert Opinion

Decision Analysis

Process Models: Markov Models

Alternative Futures and Alternative Regime-Types

Gaming: Prospective for Forecasting

Applications of Econometric Analysis

⁹⁶ See e.g. Nazli Choucri, "Applications of Econometric Analysis" in Choucri and Robinson, Eds., Forecasting in International Relations, forthcoming.

⁹⁷ See e.g. Eric Jantsch, Technological Forecasting in Perspective (Paris: OECD, 1967)

⁹⁸ See Raymond Bauer, Ed., Social Indicators (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966)

⁹⁹ Forecasting in International Relations, op. cit.

Using Technological Methods of Forecasting

System Dynamics: An Approach to Complex Systems

Early Warning Systems

Using the Past: Retrospective Forecasting

Short-Range Forecasting: The Imperatives of Tomorrow

Forecasting in Cross-National Perspective: Europe

Forecasting in the Context of International Organizations

The other non-procedural issue is the extent to which official policy planning is free to challenge first-order assumptions on which current policy rests. Most planning has been deemed "useful" only if it signs on to current definitions of national interest and broad goals and strategies, and limits its analytical and critical powers to challenging the second-and third-order premises of official policy.¹⁰⁰

Task Force XIII of the recent Department-wide reform effort recommended a built-in adversary procedure which would appraise and review ongoing policies and recommend alternatives.¹⁰¹ The most closely-analyzed diagnosis and prescription probably comes from Alexander George in his "Multiple Advocacy" approach. His own prescriptive "process model" draws on Downs' stages of

¹⁰⁰ For elaboration of this question see the author's "Foreign Policy for Disillusioned Liberals," in Foreign Policy, Winter 1972-73, also forthcoming In Search of American Foreign Policy: The Humane Use of Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

¹⁰¹ Diplomacy for the 70's, op. cit.

"search", "evaluation" and "choice",¹⁰² discussed earlier, as well as notions of bureaucratic politics and techniques of "partisan mutual adjustment" elaborated by Lindblom. The heart of George's thesis is his injunction to decision-makers to harness diverse views and interests in aid of more rational policy, rather than discouraging internal disagreements over policy. His prescription to accomplish this is the technique of "multiple advocacy", which he describes as a competitive but balanced policy system.¹⁰³

In theoretical terms this is described as a "mixed system" combining the pluralistic features of the bureaucratic politics model and the "partisan mutual adjustment" model with the norms of a "centralized management model." Acknowledging that little empirical evidence exists to clarify the virtues of an openly competitive system, George advances his hypotheses nevertheless (and, in my opinion, with considerable power¹⁰⁴).

His theories are reinforced by evidence from psychological studies of decision-making, some of which were cited earlier. George cites "lab studies of Decision-Making groups (which) provide some evidence that conflict within the group may have a constructive effect on its problem-solving activity and on the quality of its choices."¹⁰⁵ Another relevant laboratory study employs a "multiactivity model" of decision functions that usefully discriminates between the crucial elements of search, analysis and choice explicated by Downs. It

102 Anthony Downs, Inside Bureaucracy, op. cit.

103 Alexander L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," op. cit., pp. 751 ff.

104 A proposal along similar lines will be found in the author's forthcoming book In Search of American Foreign Policy: The Humane Use of Power, op. cit.

105 E.g., N.R.F. Maier and associates, Problem-Solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups (Belmont, California: Brooks/Coles, 1970), p. 757.

found that the quality of search and analysis may be significantly improved by disagreement in the group. Also, groups were not successful problem-solvers when they were concerned solely with what is best for the group.¹⁰⁶

All in all, George finds these results and the models on which they were based very relevant "for designing management models to cope with or capitalize upon the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics."¹⁰⁷

If one of the weaknesses in the planning sector of the policy process has been the short time-frame preferred on grounds of relevance to the operator, another has surely been the reluctance to challenge assumptions and premises underlying policy at their primary level. Both these factors - time-frame and assumptions - lead back to the issue of foreign policy forecasting (see above) about which some recommendations are made at the end.

In recent years the Department has experimented with forms of planning that sought to relate policy objectives to resource allocation. CASP, PARA, and the never-adopted Net Assessment technique contributed in their ways to better management.

But even before PARA was terminated in its present form, it was possible to observe that the things PARA (and Net Assessment) could not do, and thus usually took as givens, were often the very elements of the problem on which better planning was most needed - the definition of interests, goals, and objectives. Any planning system that assumes these in order to do something

¹⁰⁶ George cites here the work of Joseph L. Bower, "The Role of Conflict in Economic Decision-Making Groups and Some Empirical Results," Quarterly Journal of Economics, May 1965.

¹⁰⁷ "The Case for Multiple Advocacy," op. cit., p. 757.

else may have internal operating value; but it does not address the central weakness of the policy process, a weakness that newer forms of planning might help to redress. Social science theory cannot revolutionize the process; but as I suggest in the recommendations, it may point to methods of analysis that go significantly beyond those presently in use.

This suggests a final aid to planning -- the so-called Political Game (or, as we rechristened it at M.I.T., the Political Exercise or POLEX). The technique is well-known now, originating in the Social Science Division of RAND in the early 1950's¹⁰⁸, adapted by the present author as an adjunct to policy research at M.I.T. in the later 1950's¹⁰⁹, and used since 1961 by the Joint War Games Agency (now S.A.G.A.).

The S.A.G.A. games (some of which I have directed) are classified and omitted here, as are many others which have as their primary aim teaching or uncontrolled, serendipitous adventures. (The "rival" form of gaming -- Harold Guetzkow's Inter Nation Simulation¹¹⁰ -- was more rigorous but less focused on realistic policy actions and alternatives.)

¹⁰⁸ See Herbert Goldhammer and Hans Speier, "Some Observations on Political Gaming," World Politics, 1959 (XII).

¹⁰⁹ For a review of the POLEX to the present time, see L. P. Bloomfield and Cornelius J. Gearin, "Games Foreign Policy Experts Play," Orbis, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Winter 1973.

¹¹⁰

See Simulation in International Relations (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

With apologies for introducing another of my own researches, it unfortunately seems true that the only recent social science experimentation with the POLEX as a planning tool was our own during the late 1960's. In the M.I.T. CONEX series, as before, our players were senior professionals. Our conclusion was that it was indeed possible to expose more precise policy questions to this kind of laboratory exercise. With the aid of more rigorously controlled variables, along with observation and measurement devices, it proved possible to explore the decisional process hitherto regarded in the policy sciences as a "black box" between independent and dependent variables.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ See Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Cornelius J. Gearin, et al., Anticipating Conflict Control Policies - The CONEX Games as a Planning Tool, M.I.T. Center for International Studies, Pub. No. C/70-10, February 1970.

III. THE CASE-STUDY APPROACH

It is natural to look at historical cases of decision-making as a source of knowledge and precept concerning the process, and as a possible guide to future policy. However, the chief unknown continues to be the extent to which valid generalizations can be made across cases. This represents a profound philosophical issue that has engaged historians since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Some fairly recent case studies of foreign policy decisions accepted the norm of historical uniqueness, and took the form of "pure" historical description (which to many historians is reason enough to do such studies). In some of these "pure" histories broader lessons have of course been drawn to the extent that some general inferences, propositions or hypotheses were generated or inspired by the assembled facts. Many of them make far better reading than typical social science literature.

Some representative examples in the present era of this traditional genre would be Joseph Jones' The Fifteen Weeks, Barbara Tuchman's The Guns of August, Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis, M. Licherman "To The Yalu and Back" in E. Stein's American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies, and James C. Thompson, Jr., "How Could Vietnam Happen? An Autopsy" that appeared in the Atlantic Monthly of April 1968.

In the same traditional genre are two case studies recently commissioned by INR - the excellent account of The U.S.-Soviet Civil Air Agreement by Hans Heymann, Jr., and the Okinawa Reversion study by Peter W. Colm, Rosemary Hayes, and Joseph A. Yager.

As I said, some of these inferred potentially generalizable conclusions from their sui generis case; for instance, Heymann's interesting conditions for success (professionals with good esprit, low stakes in the issue, general adoption of a "Presidential-level" view, minimal Congressional interaction, and close liaison with the object of the exercise; also clear separation between Presidential decision and bureaucratic implementation, and use of specialists rather than generalist FSO's¹).

Indeed, one of the early examples - Bernard Cohen's study of the Japanese Peace Treaty - was focused on the domestic political process as a suggestive theoretical frame.²

However, there is really no doubt that far more feedback value can be derived from case studies for corrective or instructive learning purposes if they are designed in terms of a more explicit theoretical or conceptual framework. At a minimum, this may simply mean an a priori set of general propositions or hypotheses, or a theoretically grounded format for analysis that enables the historian to test the evidence he collects. At a maximum, formats will be developed that lay the groundwork for other cases to be studied on a comparative basis with results that can be cumulated.³

¹ The U.S.-Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration: A Case Study prepared for the Department of State, R-1047-DOS, July 1972.

² Bernard C. Cohen, The Political Process and Foreign Policy - The Making of the Japanese Peace Settlement (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

³ On the desirability of cumulative case studies for theory-building purposes, see: for example, Sidney Verba, "Some Dilemmas in Comparative Research," World Politics, October 1967; Bruce M. Russett, "International Behavior Research: Case Studies and Cumulation," in M. Haas and H.S. Kariel (eds.), Approaches to the Study of Political Science, 1970, 425-443; Oran R. Young, The Politics of Force, 1968, pp. 417-421; Harry Eckstein, "Case-Study and Theory in Macropolitics" (MS) Princeton University, 1971.

At the root of this assertion lies the conviction that while every case is of course unique in that it will never happen again in exactly the same way, there are discernible and potentially instructive patterns of action and behavior, and decision-makers can benefit from a more systematic learning process.

An encouraging number of recent case studies have been researched within the spirit of this conviction, although unfortunately most have had to rely exclusively on published sources. They varied widely in the conceptual framework they chose, whether organizational behavior theory, bargaining theory, or other specified hypotheses. But all had in common the specification of a coherent conceptual scheme that made them potentially replicable.

One isolated but fascinating example is Roberta Wohlstetter's classic Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision⁴, employing a mode of analysis involving communication theory. In a totally different vein psychologist Irving L. Janis fortified his provocative Victims of Groupthink⁵ with a set of case studies embodying a coherent perspective, aimed at hypothesis construction, and hopefully additive to the process of generalization about the policy process.

In many ways the model for others was the case study of the Korean War by Snyder and Paige, notably their conviction that "case studies of decisions made after the fact will contribute to the formulation of predictive hypotheses that can be tested in evolving situations."⁶ Per contra, the "observer not concerned with (answering the hypothesized questions posed ab initio) will only

⁴ Stanford, 1962.

⁵ Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1967).

⁶ Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige, "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea - The Application of an Analytical Scheme," in Snyder, Bruck and Sapir, Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Glencoe: Free Press, 1962), p. 208.

accidentally provide the necessary empirical foundations for another observer to do so." To avoid that anti-scientific trap they postulated a "frame-work for analysis" designed to bridge the gap between extant theories of organizational behavior and of foreign policy formation. Three variables would tell them what data to collect; organizational roles and relationships; communications and information; and motivation.⁷

Building on this case method were several further works of Richard Snyder, including his Foreign Policy Decision-Making⁸ and with J.D. Robinson, "Decision-Making in International Politics."⁹ In his later book on The Korean Decision Paige suggested using a single case as an "analytical construct" which should be researched within a "semi-structured research design" that combines a priori concepts and hypotheses with an open mind toward unforeseen elements¹⁰ — a sensible suggestion.

Another set of useful case studies (Laos, Cuba, and Vietnam) by Alexander George and his associates invented a theoretical framework aimed at generating theory on the uses and limits of what they called "coercive diplomacy,"¹¹

⁷ Ibid., pp. 210-214.

⁸ Richard Snyder et al. (Glencoe: Free Press, 1962).

⁹ In H. Kelman, Ed., International Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

¹⁰ Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision (New York: Free Press, 1968), pp. 10-11.

¹¹ Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William R. Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy - Laos-Cuba-Vietnam (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

through typologies of situations that would "account for the policy-relevant variations among particular cases."¹² In his "Multiple Advocacy" article referred to above, George includes mini-cases involving Korea 1950, Dien bien phu, the Bay of Pigs, the Vietnam Escalation, the MLF, Dominican Republic, and Cuban Missile Crisis.¹³

Yet another strain of case-study was that developed by Robert North of Stanford in which he used the 1914 crisis to examine hypotheses concerning perceptions in crisis.¹⁴ (A fascinating cognate work, not precisely a case study, was Robert Jervis' "Hypotheses on Misperception" based on case studies, and mentioned earlier in this report.¹⁵

An additional example of case study based on such theoretical apparatus is to be found in a forthcoming book by George and Smoke containing 13 case studies illustrating aspects of deterrence theory as exemplified in U.S. foreign policy.¹⁶

¹² Ibid., p. xv.

¹³ "The Case for Multiple Advocacy," op. cit.

¹⁴ Robert North, "Perception and Action in the 1914 Crisis," Journal of International Affairs, 1967(21). See in the same connection Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., "Stumbling Toward War: Organization Structure and the Austro-Hungarian Experience," American Political Science Review, September 1971.

¹⁵ Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," World Politics 1968 (XX).

¹⁶ Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University, 1974).

A more recent conceptual framework has been that supplied by the so-called Bureaucratic Politics Model, and several significant case studies have been grounded on the propositions embodied in that notion.

Examples of this school are reasonably well-known, notably Graham Allison's study of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962¹⁷ in which he took "a walk around" the crisis from the perspective of the three major models of policy behavior; the similar case study of the MLF by John Steinbruner¹⁸; Richard Neustadt's study of the Skybolt controversy;¹⁹ and Morton Halperin's case studies on the Taiwan Straits crisis and the decision to deploy the ABM.²⁰ (The case study on Peru done for INR by Luigi Einaudi follows the Allison model.)

A final species may be found in the project I recently directed at the M.I.T. Center for International Studies under the sponsorship of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Administration. In seeking to discipline available knowledge concerning the anatomy, so to speak, of local conflicts and small wars, my associate Amelia C. Leiss and I developed a preliminary dynamic model

¹⁷ Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971).

¹⁸ John D. Steinbruner, The Mind and Milieu of Policy-Makers: A Case Study of the MLF, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Department of Political Science, M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass., 1968). To be published as Decisions Under Complexity: A Theoretical Analysis of the Politics of Nuclear Sharing (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

¹⁹ Richard E. Neustadt, Alliance Politics (New York: Columbia Univ., 1970).

²⁰ Morton H. Halperin, "The Decision to Deploy the ABM: Bureaucratic Politics in the Pentagon and White House in the Johnson Administration," Paper delivered to American Political Science Convention, September 1970.

of the stages through which conflicts seem to pass, and the pressures which events, personalities, and other factors appear to exert either in the direction of worsening or ameliorating the conflict.²¹

Having constructed the theoretical framework (christened "Historical-Analytical"), thirteen contemporary cases of conflict were thoroughly researched under Miss Leiss' direction.²² Subsequent case studies were done according to the same format and it has continued to serve the somewhat different but related needs of the CASCON system²³ subsequently developed under the overall project ("Computer-Aided System for Handling Information on Local Conflict").

The case study literature reflects some continuing controversies in addition to the use of theory, and which to use. One question is whether crisis cases are the best cases to study, inasmuch as when the normal day-to-day machinery of government is suspended (as in the Cuban Missile Crisis) it is not clear that one learns much that is applicable to the usual policy process. Hans Heymann warns that to focus on the bureaucratic pulling and hauling process in crisis "is a treacherous exercise ... No one can really know what is in the President's mind."²⁴ What are probably needed are parallel strategies, aimed

²¹ See Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Amelia C. Leiss et al., The Control of Local Conflict, ACDA/WEC-98, Vol. II (Washington: G.P.O., 1967); and Bloomfield and Leiss, Controlling Small Wars (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), which contains case studies of the Soviet-Iranian Conflict, Greek Civil War, Bay of Pigs, Indonesian War of Independence, and Middle East 1956-67.

²² See Amelia C. Leiss and Lincoln P. Bloomfield, The Control of Local Conflict: Studies of Conflict C.I.S./M.I.T. C/67-19-C, June 30, 1967.

²³ See Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Robert R. Beattie, "Computers and Foreign Policy - The CASCON Experiment," Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. XV, No. 1, Spring 1971.

²⁴ The U.S.-Soviet Civil Air Agreement, op. cit., p. 2.

at studying the process under strain, and under normal conditions. Obviously the phenomena differ.

A different issue raised by some, for instance Irving Janis and the Yager team, is whether it is more instructive to study cases of success, or cases of failure.

Finally, some have recommended case studies where a particular weakness is manifest; for example, in an interesting addendum to the recent UNA-USA report on policy process David Bell and Adam Yarmolinsky reported a dearth of analysis or evidence "of actual recent experience in achieving U.S. objectives in multilateral situations," and urged remedies "if we are to design more effective systems for handling U.S. Government business in an increasingly complex and interrelated world."²⁵

All in all, the virtues of good case studies for the purpose of better analysis of the policy process seem impressive: data is readily available; sets of events can be readily distinguished from other sets; some interesting theoretical constructs are already in hand to make the learning from case studies of general value; and good people can be found who are both interested and competent.

Indeed, we face an embarras de richesse in trying to pick and choose among promising case study methods. As I have shown, various scholars offer competing arguments for using cases as valuable means of increasing knowledge about the process, but each has his favorite process in mind (e.g., organizational behavior model, bureaucratic politics model, "guided retrodiction", "cohesive group phenomena," normative theory, communication theory, etc.).

²⁵ Foreign Policy Decision Making: The New Dimensions, Report of National Policy Panel of UN Association of the USA, 1973, p. 102.

My provisional conclusion is that no single design is ideal, and the recommendations made at the end reflect that sense of eclecticism.

IV. CLUES FROM BUSINESS THEORY

A brief survey of the area of business management theory for possible clues to theoretical work that might be relevant to the Department's policy process yields findings that can be summed up readily: there is some roughly comparable theorizing in business management, even drawing on some of the same source material involving organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics. There is considerable emphasis on human and group psychology, and also on organizational reforms to cure observed defects in the decisional process.

My strong impression from selected readings and a few interviews is that corporate management, and those who theorize about it, share many of the same frustrations and sense of unknowns as those interested in the governmental policy process. Indeed, there is amusement in management circles at the persistence of the belief that the corporate world enjoys greater efficiency, effectiveness, purposeful behavior, and rational linkage of goals to resources, than does the policy-maker in foreign affairs. As noted earlier, both worlds are strongly influenced by the literature of "limited rationality" and "incrementalism" in decision-making.

But a substantial difference may be the greater willingness of business to employ psychologists, using techniques such as sensitivity training, to help get fixes on their policy process. They are likely to look for the source of organizational failings directly into the areas of interpersonal relationships, areas that the Department has at least in the past not seriously considered as a prime unit of policy process analysis.

One of the recent innovative strands of theoretical work in business management that grew out of the earlier sensitivity literature is known as Organization Development, an approach that seeks to improve the linkage between goals, performance, and resources. According to Professor Richard Beckhard, the dilemma is "how to fully mobilize the energies of the organization's human resources toward achievement of the organization's performance objectives." The solution via Organization Development is a "planned, managed change effort." The means used are "planned interventions," by "change agents", in the organization's processes, armed with "behavioral science knowledge" bearing on: individual motivation, power, communication, perception, cultural norms, problem-solving, goal-setting, interpersonal relations, inter-group relations, and conflict management."¹

One of Organization Development's chief tenets is that success requires a "work climate in which increasingly complex decisions can be made by people with the information regardless of their location in the organization."² This rather heretical departure from the norms of hierarchical bureaucratic structures is in fact a test of "healthy" decision-making: "Decision-making in a healthy organization is located where the information sources are, rather than in a particular role or level of hierarchy."³

In an era of steady centralization of foreign policy decision-making the implications for the Department of this axiom boggle the mind somewhat. But at a realistic level a recommendation along these lines is possibly in order.

¹ Richard Beckhard, Organization Development: Strategies and Models (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1969) pp. v, 1-13. I am indebted to colleagues at the M.I.T. Sloan School of Management for this and other information.

² Ibid., p. 7.

³ Ibid., p. 26.

A final possible clue from this selective probe into business management theory is in the realm of training and education. Task Force X strongly recommended a rejuvenated and influential Foreign Service Institute as part of the Department's proposed aggiornamento.

But advanced thinking in this field strongly discourages in-house education, in the belief that it perpetuates such weaknesses in the decisional process as are due to lack of creativity or unwillingness to challenge institutional orthodoxy. In the words of a perceptive observer of both spheres, what the Task Force saw as part of the solution is, from the standpoint of advanced business management theory, part of the problem.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In reading what follows it is important to bear in mind that the findings of this survey do not focus on the policy process in the Department, but rather on what social science research has contributed or might contribute to better understanding of that process -- and thus perhaps to an improved process.

The reader is asked to recall the brief analysis of "the problem" at the beginning of this paper. I suggested three ways of characterizing that problem.

The first was discontent with policy, for which there were clearly no organizational, procedural or theoretical panaceas, but which might on the other hand be positively affected by certain "process solutions" such as better planning and forecasting.

The second version of the problem is embedded in the chronic criticisms of Departmental responses as slow, uninspiring, pedestrian, or uncoordinated. Social science theory seems to have little of value to say here, although one can think of some relevant solutions.

The third version of the problem resembles criticisms of comparable institutions whose bigness or hierarchical structure typically produces shortcomings such as inertia, inefficiency, resistance to change, and failure to look ahead. The question here is whether the State Department policy process can benefit from diagnoses of similar instances of bureaucratic weaknesses common to many institutions.

These three definitions of the Department's "problem" all have in common the inference of possible remedies from: improved capacity to analyze and anticipate external events; more imaginative solutions to policy issues; and better self-understanding and awareness which in any human situation is believed to generate more rational and purposeful behavior.

In the Introductory section I further suggested breaking the problem into its dynamic elements or phases: Input (involving information), Decision (involving deliberation and selection among choices and options), and Output (involving implementation). I said that this analysis would focus on the Input and Decision phases.

These phases integrate with the three types of solutions just adumbrated to make up the following categories: better-analyzed inputs with better anticipation; more imaginative solutions; and improved knowledge and self-understanding. My recommendations for future action or research will fall under these three headings. Within each I will also try to distinguish between recommendations to apply relatively well-established research findings, and recommendations for new research that might lead to findings of practical interest to the Department.

1. Better-Analyzed Inputs and Anticipation.

The chief criticism here is of the superficiality and lack of analytical depth of much reporting from the field, a weakness reinforced by congenital innocence of recently developed social science models of analysis of the

behavior of other countries.

The charge of superficiality raises issues of quality control I cannot deal with here. However, when it comes to analytical frameworks, a number of scholars I have discussed point to the relevance of "linkage politics,"¹ to the policy process in ways the Department might find suggestive, particularly the insight that the domestic process of both sides may be the single most important factor in an international transaction. (Two of INR's recent case studies concluded that undesirable characteristics of bureaucratic behavior are "aggravated by the community's primitive understanding of the other side";² they urge that the Department radically improve its capacity for interpreting the domestic processes of other countries.³)

One implication for action is that the Department's interpretive reporting might make more systematic application of some well-researched models of domestic internal behavior, whether those of bureaucratic behavior or developmental theories found elsewhere in the social sciences.

One way to do this would be to build into the FSI curriculum more explicit theoretically-grounded methodologies such as the Bureaucratic Politics Model⁴, for reporting officers in training, with simulated reporting exercises drawing on various analytical frameworks.

¹ "Linkage Politics" is increasingly used by social scientists to refer to the intimate (and under-researched) connectives between domestic politics and foreign policy. (See the writings of James M. Rosenau, e.g., Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems (New York: Free Press, 1969).)

² Hans Heymann, Jr., The U.S.-Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration, A Case Study Prepared for the U.S. Department of State, R-1047-DOS, July 1972.

³ Luigi Einaudi, Assistance to Peru: A Case Study, 1963-68, p. 58.

⁴ Graham T. Allison wrote that "Transfer of these skills from the fingertips of artists to a form that can guide other students of foreign policy is this model's most pressing need." Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972).

Another avenue of action would be to step up training of FSO's in the use of formal forecasting techniques, such as econometric analysis, Delphi method, Bayesian techniques, technological assessment, et al.

Along with this, in order to have a better factual basis for instituting reforms in the capacity to anticipate events, I recommend that a selective historical analysis be made of past forecasts and predictions from the field, measured against actual outcomes.⁵ A different approach would be to make a series of short in-house, classified case studies of key elections, coups, conflict outbreaks and the like, tracking the known events back against the available analysis, reportage and intelligence flow that preceded it (and perhaps using something like Roberta Wohlstetter's model⁶).

A strong case can be made that another major weakness is the imperfect institutional memory of the Department. Several promising techniques are under development in the social sciences in the way of computerized foreign affairs data bases, and even crude policy-analytical programs, that warrant the Department's encouragement in order that they might be brought to a more directly applicable stage.

⁵ As Robert Rothstein pointed out, "We have no studies that have directly attempted to analyze the predictive record of political practitioners," Planning, Prediction and Policy Making in Foreign Affairs: Theory and Practice (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 166.

⁶ See Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford University, 1962).

Finally, more in the category of "basic research" but nonetheless of potential value in evaluating critiques of Departmental reportage, it would be helpful to make a questionnaire survey of the information foreign affairs professionals depend upon. The hypothesis might be that officers of the Department depend by an overwhelming margin on classified cable traffic plus intelligence estimates, while most well-informed outsiders depend primarily on the New York Times and other international journals and open sources plus travel, interviews, and theory. The results should throw light on differences in their capacity to forecast, as well as on the degree of confidence that can be placed in independent estimates depending on subject matter.

2. More Imaginative Solutions.

My main recommendation is for an upgraded medium and long-range policy planning capability endowed with a) support and confidence from above, and b) with the relative independence to challenge first-order assumptions underlying current policy, as well as c) to apply techniques such as systematic analysis, forecasting, and simulation as adjuncts to customary modes of thinking. I am convinced that these three qualities have been missing far more than they have been present from the inception of S/P through the present regime of S/PC.

Three particular devices developed by the social sciences are applicable in upgrading the planning capability.

(1) First are techniques for a more institutionalized and accepted adversary process. Contrary to much of the conventional wisdom about smooth management of organizations and processes, the aim of the Department should not be a "frictionless model" of policy-making. On the contrary, much of the theoretical work done on organizational and institutional phenomena is convincing in arguing for "creative ambiguity" (as Harlan Cleveland put it). More open, structured forms of adveraary-type assumption-challenging ought not to be regarded as threatening, but should rather be deliberately developed for potential in contributing to a more highly valued policy product.⁷

(2) Closely related to this is the second device: gaming and simulation. Irving Janis urged the use of the POLEX as helpfully surfacing symptoms of "groupthink", as well as for training (the example he gives happens to be the author's POLEX II produced in 1960). As reported earlier, I (and doubtless others) believe we have now developed improved techniques for pre-testing strategies and analyzing competing policy alternatives through a better-structured political exercise. To the extent this is true, the Department should either develop an in-house capability for analytical policy games, or alternatively, should play a far more directing role in the work of the Political- Military Division of SAGA under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which runs a more unstructured variety of political games "for the community."

In this connection I strongly recommend an in-house review of the classified file of political-military games put on by JWGA (now SAGA) over

⁷ Alexander George, Irving Janis, Herbert Spiro and the present author all have advanced ideas as to how such a procedure might be structured.

a 12 year period, with various hypotheses about policy process and expected reaction in mind. (The same review could also be made of the comparable M.I.T. games.)

(3) The third sector under this heading is psychological. In important ways this may be the most significant problem-area of all, but it is least clear what applications of theory might be helpful. My primary recommendation thus repeats that of former Under Secretary Crockett (referring to the Chris Argyris 1966 study) for a "continuing examination."⁸ This is one sector in which the experience of business is relevant and potentially helpful.

Clearly needed is a systematic inventory of the possible applications of the behavioral sciences to the foreign policy process and the conduct of diplomacy.⁹ I would also argue that political or decision games and other forms of simulation of the policy process can help to uncover not only the elements in the "black box" discussed above where the "intervening variables" of policy argument and agreement can be seen, but also the reactions of individuals to the pressures of action and consensus under reasonably controlled laboratory conditions.

⁸ Some Causes of Organizational Ineffectiveness Within the Department of State. Occasional Paper #2, Center for International Systems Research, Department of State, Publication 8180, January 1967, p. v. Mr. Crockett said that "the organization will not be able to integrate (Argyris') recommendations effectively until the interpersonal milieu is altered." p. 2.

⁹ Victims of Groupthink, op. cit., pp. 209-11.

I cannot refrain, particularly after recently listening to denunciation during the Watergate hearings of alleged inebriation on the part of American lawmakers, from passing along Herodotus' reminder (via Irving Janis) that the ancient Persians, whenever they made a decision following sober deliberations, would always reconsider the matter under the influence of wine. Modest empirical experimentation with this hypothesis persuades me that, failing all other multiple advocacy or related correctives to consensus pressures, this ought to be studied further as a way of relaxing those tensions which may build into the policy process unnecessary rigidity, diffidence, or misplaced certainty.

3. Improved Knowledge and Self-Understanding.

First under this heading is the acquisition of more systematic knowledge about past operation of the system with its well-known procedures and process.

Case studies represent a very promising means, but only if theoretically sound standard frameworks can be developed permitting cases to be compared over time and across regions. Several of the formats discussed earlier are impressive; but no single one was persuasively definitive or ideal.

It is therefore recommended that a preliminary study be made to seek an amalgam of approaches, matched with meaningful typologies of cases, aimed at generating maximum usable knowledge for the Department. Perhaps a team consisting of one historian, one psychologist, and one experienced FSO could develop a set of specific recommendations. Alternatively, an outside social scientist could work up a typology, and then in consultation with specialists

analyze the various available combinations of theory and method.

Another approach would be to select one from the alternative methods, and commission several additional cases in order to test the method, gambling that replication of one or another method will surface potentially compelling hypotheses or conclusions. (For example, a case study of Departmental decision-making using by analogy George's Typology of Nine Malfunctions; or review of a case already studied but using Janis' hypotheses regarding group behavior; or Allison's Model III).

I (and others) strongly recommend that cases be selected for study which do not portray the process in crisis. Rather, on the thesis of the Hound of the Baskervilles, the system while seemingly normal and quiet could be revealing indeed of the way the process works day in and day out.

* * *

In conclusion, two final recommendations are based on the premise that this enterprise is a two-way street.

First, while outside social science research can furnish possibly relevant models and constructs, or bring to bear independent judgments based on certain analytical methods, the Department in both cases should be viewed as the primary source of data, whether of case studies, attitudes and beliefs, working habits and style of decision-making, or operational experience.

Second, since some of the most active critics of the policy process are younger scholars with minimal first-hand experience, the Department should facilitate one or two year attractive terminal Departmental assignments for promising younger scholars in the foreign affairs field to improve their capacity to contribute more effectively to the policy process in their future research.